



UT San Antonio™
The University of Texas at San Antonio

College of Health, Community and Policy
Department of Social Work

Master of Social Work Handbook

REVISED SPRING 2026

TO OUR MSW STUDENTS

Bienvenidos and Welcome!

It is a pleasure to welcome you to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program in the College for Health, Community and Policy (HCaP) at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UT San Antonio) and our vibrant community of learners, educators, researchers, advocates, and staff. Guided by social justice principles, ethics, and a passion for positive social change, we form a forward-looking, value-driven, innovative team of social work professionals. We actively partner with agencies, organizations and institutions serving the San Antonio community, within a global-local context, to co-create new knowledge and solutions to the most pressing social problems.

Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and recognized as a strong MSW program by its peers, the program is approaching its twentieth year, advancing research-informed practice, cutting-edge educational practices and social innovation. Our emphasis is on the transformative power of culturally competent social work, bridging social work practice at all levels, while fostering active student-centered learning. We are a dedicated learning community, bound together by inclusive professional social work values, focused on improving people's well-being, and life-choices. In this rich, multi-dimensional learning environment, our graduates continue to surpass the average passage rate on the state licensing exam, while also finding challenging employment that matters, in change-making careers. The dynamic, community-engaged nature of social work makes it a uniquely forward-looking profession as we enter the second quarter of the 21st century.

Supporting the growth of our students and preparing them for meaningful professional careers is our primary purpose, while continuing to engage them as alumni and community leaders upon graduation. As our students and future colleagues, we wish you every success, and join you in working towards making, and being, the change we all wish to see.

Sincerely,



John C. Bricout, PhD, MSW
Professor and Chair

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THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT SAN ANTONIO DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
STUDENT HANDBOOK AND FIELD MANUAL

INTRODUCTION

This *Student Handbook* includes information about the UTSA MSW Program that is important for students to know about our Program, our curriculum, and the profession of social work. The *Handbook* also includes relevant UTSA department and University-wide policies. Students are also responsible for knowing about other UTSA information not included in the *Handbook* that relates to registration, financial aid, student resources, and general University policies included in the *Graduate Catalog*, available at <http://www.utsa.edu/gcat/>, and the *UTSA Information Bulletin*, available at <http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/>.

The Context of UTSA's MSW Program

About San Antonio

San Antonio, with a population of 1.52 million and the 7th largest city in the United States, is a vibrant community with a rich cultural history. Sixty-four percent of the San Antonio population is Latino/Hispanic. A publicly funded graduate social work program in San Antonio is critical to adequately address the unique cultural and economic needs of the community. Because San Antonio serves as a cultural and economic magnet for immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America as well as a growing population of resettled refugees from all over the world, culturally competent social work is even more of a priority for social service providers.

San Antonio can lay claim to many bragging rights. It is a major tourist attraction.

Numerous national conventions are held in the city yearly. The city is home to a number of world-class medical facilities, including the Brooke Army Medical Center, which specializes in the treatment of burn victims from all over the world, and the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio, which houses a medical school and a nationally-recognized cancer treatment and research center. San Antonio is also home to the U.S. Army Medical Command and one of the largest Air Force bases in the country. Last, but not least, the city is home to several colleges and universities, including UTSA, the state's fastest-growing public university

About UTSA

The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) is a multicultural, discovery enterprise institution and the second largest component institution in The University of Texas System with over 38,200 students. UTSA opened its doors to students in 1969 after approval was given by the Texas Legislature to establish a public university in South Texas to provide opportunities for participation in higher education to its largely Latino population. UTSA is currently ranked 9th in the United States in the number of undergraduate and 16th in graduate degrees awarded to Hispanic students (*Hispanic Outlook*, 2018). UTSA is classified as a Tier One, premier public research university. UTSA's Main Campus is located about 15 miles from downtown San

Antonio. Thus, UTSA opened its Downtown Campus in 1998, housing the College of Public Policy in which the Department of Social Work was located through 2019. The Department of Social Work remains at the Downtown Campus, but as of January 2020 has transitioned to be part of the newly formed College for Health, Community and Policy.

UTSA is a learner-centered community committed to diversity and freedom of inquiry and dedicated to the educational attainments and success of students in San Antonio and South Texas, especially those that have been historically underrepresented in higher education. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching selected UTSA to receive the prestigious Community Engagement Classification, recognizing the university's commitment to serving the local community. It also promotes basic and applied research that addresses the critical issues of the community, as well as a lifetime commitment to learning. UTSA plays a key role in shaping the future of South Texas by contributing to the development of leadership through higher education. As a metropolitan institution, UTSA's purpose is to provide educational opportunities to a growing number of "nontraditional" college students. UTSA encourages attendance of these students by offering flexible scheduling, varied course offerings, and extensive student support services. More than half of UTSA's students come from groups underrepresented in higher education. Many students are the first in their families to attend a college or university.

UTSA's Mission is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge through research and discovery, teaching and learning, community engagement and public service. As an institution of access and excellence, UTSA embraces multicultural traditions and serves as a center for intellectual and creative resources as well as a catalyst for socioeconomic development - for Texas, the nation and the world. The Vision of the University is to be a premier public research university, providing access to educational excellence and preparing citizen leaders for the global environment. Consistent with the UTSA vision statement, the Department of Social Work is helping to educate a workforce prepared to serve as citizen leaders committed to community transformation. These leaders will be educated to understand and value differences, to possess cultural knowledge and skills that transcend regional and national boundaries, and to promote positive change marked by critical thinking and analytical and reflective evaluation.

About the College for Health, Community and Policy

In the spring of 2020, UTSA's Department of Social Work transitioned from being part of The College of Public Policy (COPP) to the College for Health, Community and Policy (HCaP). The mission of UTSA's new College for Health, Community & Policy will center on an overarching concept of health, inclusive of its broader elements of wellness and well-being. This structure is designed to better prepare students for the modern setting of human health related careers, in which physician scientists, nurses, therapists, technicians, social workers, social service and public service workers and policymakers work together to deliver comprehensive health solutions that advance local Texas communities. In order to advance this mission, the College also houses the Departments of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Demography, Kinesiology, Psychology, Public Administration, Public Health, and Sociology.

About The Department of Social Work

The Department of Social Work, situated in a “majority-minority” community within an interdisciplinary college context in the vibrant, culturally rich downtown area of San Antonio, is unique in its institutional and community setting. The majority of the Department’s students represent diverse historically underserved populations within institutions of higher education.

Over half of our students are full-time working professionals who bring a wealth of community experience to the social work classroom and field practicum.

The UTSA MSW Program has one specialized concentration in cultural competence. The Program facilitates learning through transformational pedagogy, creating a community of learners that emphasizes personal and professional transformation. There is an expectation that our graduates will facilitate the transformation of the clients/client systems to which they provide services as well as the communities in which they live and work. The Program focuses on the preparation of students who will be capable of bridging traditional social work roles with a diverse group of stakeholders. The Program is grounded in academic and professional affiliations across multiple disciplines, thereby providing exciting opportunities for innovations to advance the profession. The contextual factors described above combine with one another to contribute to the uniqueness of the UTSA MSW Program with its emphasis on values of social and economic justice, critical inquiry, competence, and service and its overall emphasis on cultural competence.

OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM AND CURRICULUM

Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals Mission

The Department of Social Work’s mission was developed within the context of the clients its graduates will serve, focusing on the San Antonio community, South Texas and beyond. The mission, “To serve as catalysts for transformational culturally competent social work through research, education and service within a local-global context,” delineates the current focus of the Department, which emphasizes the need to be a culturally competent practitioner, throughout the curriculum. The expectation is that the emphasis on knowledge, skills, values, and self-reflection will result in the transformation of students as they move through the Program, emerging with new ways of critical thinking, new skills and abilities, and articulated core values that are congruent with the social work profession, all from a culturally competent perspective. Through its education of culturally competent social workers who are transformed as they move through the Program, the Department is helping to educate a workforce prepared to serve as citizen leaders within the local-global environment.

Vision

A just and caring world where systemic barriers are dismantled, and all

Values

UTSA social work administration, faculty, staff, and students commit to adhering to the values and principles set forth in the *National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics*. The Department has identified four values, social and economic justice, critical inquiry, competence, and service, that are congruent with UTSA's mission and the social work profession. Students will learn more about these values and how they fit with our Program and profession as they move through the Social Work Program. (*The NASW Code of Ethics* is included in this document as an appendix).

Program Goals

Five primary Program themes flow from the UTSA MSW Program mission: transformative social work, culturally competent practice, multidimensional contextual perspective, socially responsible practice, and contribution to the profession and society. These themes inform the goals of the UTSA MSW Program and are integrated throughout the MSW Program curriculum. The Department of Social Work at The University of Texas at San Antonio demonstrates commitment to its mission through the following MSW Program goals:

1. Transformative social work – The MSW program aims to prepare social workers to be critically self- reflective, creative, flexible, open to possibilities, innovative and collaborative in order to engage in social work practice that catalyzes positive change for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a changing environment.

Transformative social work is a collaborative change process involving both a philosophical and applied approach to influencing circumstances in the world (Schott & Weiss, 2016; Witkin, 2014). A transformative stance in learning and practice involves seeking to understand the world as it is while also questioning dominant social discourses to examine privilege and oppression, to imagine possibilities of what could be, and to create positive change. This orientation involves seeking to understand empirical knowledge of the world as it is now, while remaining open to possibilities for future change. A transformative approach facilitates finding strengths and possibilities. As reflected in our goal statement, transformative practice requires innovation and creativity, and involves ongoing critical self-reflection and self-correction, and ongoing examination of underlying beliefs, values, knowledge, and ideologies of self and others (Witkin, 2014). Envisioning and facilitating change involves mutuality in relationships and working in solidarity with vulnerable and oppressed populations. Our goal statement focused on transformative social work also references a changing environment; a transformative approach facilitates flexibility across different circumstances. Practicing with this stance requires ongoing critical inquiry to enable ethical and effective engagement across multiple dimensions of differences and needs in varying contexts.

UTSA MSW students transform through classes, community and field experiences and the

collegial relationships they develop while in the Program. The expectation highlighted by this goal is that Program graduates will engage collaboratively and creatively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to facilitate positive change. Graduates are expected to model leadership in their profession and communities, playing key roles in generating intellectual inquiry, identifying strengths and possibilities, and inspiring others for positive change. Throughout their careers, they are expected to continue the ongoing critical self-reflection and correction practices nurtured across the MSW curriculum, and maintain an open and adaptive lifelong learning stance that enables imagining change, collaboration, and fostering transformation.

2. Culturally competent practice – The MSW program aims to develop social workers specialized in culturally competent practice with diverse populations within a local-global context.

Culturally competent practice provides the overall framework for the Program. The Program has integrated multiple perspectives about the meaning of culturally competent practice into its conceptualization, in agreement with Williams (2006) and others that culturally competent practice involves capacities for working across multiple paradigms to identify effective, ethical, and responsive ways of engaging with diverse clients and client systems. As a general premise, the Program recognizes cultural competence as “a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or amongst professionals and enable the system, agency, or those professionals to engage the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (National Center for Cultural Competence, n.d., p. 1, as cited in NASW, 2015). Cultural competence includes respect, valuing differences, and knowledge of diverse groups.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) states that ethical practice requires cultural competence, to include practice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels, and an intersectional understanding of diversity and oppression (NASW, 2015). The *Standards and Indicators for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*, developed by NASW’s National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity, describe cultural competence as involving self-awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills enabling effective cross-cultural practice, with an intersectional view of culture, and requiring ongoing growth and learning. Furthermore, they recognize action and advocacy as necessary to advance culturally competent social work and “disrupt the societal process that marginalize populations. Cultural competence includes action to challenge institutional and structural oppression and the accompanying feelings of privilege and internalized oppression” (2015, p. 10).

Our Program’s single specialization in culturally competent practice builds on these formulations, guided by a social justice perspective, critical inquiry, and social constructionism, which views reality as co-constructed through dialogue and social interactions. Our Program considers culturally competent practice to involve a “relational, dialogical process between the worker and the client, between cultures, and between people and context” (Lum, 2011, p. 3). The

concept of the *relational, dialogical process* has been important in understanding that cultural competence is not an attainable end point a person or institution achieves; instead, culturally competent practice is an ongoing, lived process acted out through relationships. Our Program's grounding in social justice moves our conception of cultural competence beyond viewing competence as located within the worker to viewing it as a relational process that places the client at the center and the relational process as integral. Practicing in this way requires a shift in worldview, transformational educational experiences, and specialized competencies. Our Program's operationalization of culturally competent practice is detailed further under AS M2.1 – Specialized Practice.

The understanding of *culture* in our Program aligns with Azzopardi and McNeill's (2016, p. 283) conceptualization that culture is:

The shared identity or identities of a group of people based on common traits, customs, values, norms, and patterns of behaviors that are socially transmitted and highly influential in shaping beliefs, experiences, and worldviews... conceptualizations of human diversity extend beyond outward manifestations of culture such as race, religious observances, or material artifacts to include subjective experiences associated with the multiple social locations in which individuals are immersed, including age, gender, sexual orientation, (dis)ability, socioeconomic status, geography, and political affiliation, among other diversities. Through a contemporary postmodern lens, culture and diversity are viewed as ever-evolving (Dean, 2001). From this perspective, diverse groups are not homogenous in nature despite sharing some common history, attributes, or practices.

Individuals are understood to have intersecting and fluid identities, with wide variation between and within different groups.

At the outset of our self-study process, as part of considering our mission, we reviewed recent literature on cultural competence and considered related concepts such as cultural humility, cultural awareness, cultural sensitivity, and cultural consciousness (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016; Danso, 2016; Fisher-Borne, Cain, & Martin, 2015; Garrañ & Werkmeister, 2013; Osteen & Shipe, 2016; Nadan, 2017). Although we retained the “competence” terminology in our mission and curriculum, agreeing with Danso (2016) and others that it encompassed concepts of other terms, we also agreed to incorporate the language of “humility” more, as another effective way to communicate elements taught in our curriculum, such as the open and not-knowing learner stance. Consistent with recent literature, our Program emphasizes that practice across the micro, mezzo, macro continuum is critical in culturally competent practice (Azzopardi & McNeill, 2016; NASW, 2015).

3. Multidimensional contextual perspective -- The MSW program aims to prepare social workers for specialized practice informed by a multidimensional contextual perspective, which is a helping approach attuned to the complexity of human experience, honoring the diversity of intersecting client identities, experiences, systems, strengths, problems, needs, and injustices.

The multidimensional contextual perspective is a helping approach developed by Guadalupe and Lum (2005) that considers the complexity of human experience and honors the diversity of intersecting client identities, experiences, systems, problems, needs, and injustices.

Multidimensional contextual practice is based on an understanding of the intersection of the contextual factors that contribute to a client/client system's functioning and needs. This perspective incorporates the intersectionality of the multiple identities of an individual, group, or community (e.g., ethnicity, race, class, gender, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, political affiliation, veteran's status, religion, spirituality, ability, national origin, immigrant status); the professional worker and client relationship and professional mandates; agency; environment; and social, political, cultural, and historical factors. The context, or point where transactions occur between systems, influences "how relationships, settings, events, and environments are arranged or rearranged... Consideration of context and dimension while addressing human diversity and commonalities is critical...to minimize the possibility of marginalizing clients' experiences, strengths, and challenges (Guadalupe and Lum, 2005, p. 4).

MSW students in the Program develop skills in applying a multidimensional contextual perspective to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate their work with clients/client systems based on an understanding of their diverse strengths, problems, needs, and injustices. Differential assessment and intervention are based on an understanding of the multidimensional nature of diverse clients' problems, needs, and injustices of varying magnitude, scope, and duration and the circumstances/context in which services are provided.

Transformative culturally competent social workers must consider the multidimensionality and contexts at all levels of the environment and the ways that they intersect and interact in order to work effectively with clients/client systems. This framework shapes the critical inquiry needed for effective practice and ethical, socially responsible services. A multidimensional contextual perspective also is critical in understanding and advocating for social, environmental, and economic justice.

4. Socially responsible service -- The MSW program aims to prepare social workers for socially responsible and ethically-grounded practice that advances social, economic, and environmental justice and human rights.

Socially responsible service is based on a differential understanding of human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice as they relate to oppression and poverty, with the aim of challenging structural and institutional oppression, promoting just and anti-oppressive practices, including the equitable and unprejudiced access to basic rights on a local-global level. Socially responsible practitioners continuously discover, appraise, and attend to changing locales,

populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services. They provide transformational leadership in promoting sustainable improvements in access, delivery, participation, and quality of social goods and services. They incorporate the values and ethics of the social work profession in all interactions with clients, client systems, and colleagues. Socially responsible social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own growth. At the specialized practice level, socially responsible approaches must be used differentially across populations with diverse experiences, strengths, vulnerabilities, and intersecting identities through culturally competent practice.

The goal statement focused on preparing graduates for socially responsible and ethically-grounded practice is furthered through Program efforts to create an educational environment that promotes socially responsible program planning and implementation, teaching, research, and service with students, UTSA, and the community. The expectation is that UTSA MSW graduates will integrate socially responsible service through their professional values, knowledge, and skills to work collaboratively with communities. Inclusive and generalist socially responsible service cuts across the social work generalist – specialized curriculum continuum. It guides and prioritizes social work services, irrespective of specialization and differing fields of practice. It is the integrative construct that mobilizes action to work collaboratively with communities. Graduates of the UTSA MSW Program will commit to use their academic privilege to contribute to the betterment of the lives of diverse populations. To be a transformative culturally competent social worker, one must demonstrate social responsibility in all areas of practice.

5. Contributions to profession and society -- The MSW program aims to enhance the social work profession and the broader society through culturally-competent and collaborative knowledge building, research, community engagement, and social action that transforms practice, policy, services, and communities.

Faculty, staff, and students within the Department engage in education, practice, policy, and research in collaborative university-community relationships. UTSA MSW students, faculty, staff, and alumnae/i commit to engage with communities in solving complex social problems. They partner with other social workers and beyond, spanning boundaries to collaborate across disciplines and professions. They also work to enhance the social work profession through active engagement in professional organizations and in collaborative efforts with others.

Social problems are complex and demand collaboration across a spectrum of stakeholders, including community members and those who use social services. Social workers practicing with transformative cultural competence do not engage as experts, but as versatile facilitators who elicit voices of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities who are most knowledgeable about their own lives and communities and best positioned to transform them.

Social workers need to understand their own world views and serve with humility in the learner role to gain knowledge about the worldviews of others, recognizing the diversities of those with whom they work and the need to incorporate a multidimensional contextual perspective in

collaborative interactions. Our Program goal related to contributing to the profession and society is furthered by sustaining a community of diverse learners who play transformative roles for one another as they progress in the Program and profession, to enhance the social work profession itself and the communities in which they live and work. Graduates are expected to be life-long learners, continuing to transform themselves and their own practice approaches. Their engagement is expected to be ongoing, influencing provision of responsive service delivery systems that meet diverse client needs, and advocating for social, environmental, and economic justice.

Integrative Conceptual Framework Theoretical Perspectives

CULTURAL COMPETENCE	ECOLOGICAL/ SYSTEMS	STRENGTHS/ EMPOWERMENT	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION
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- Cultural Competence – MSW students use a cultural competence lens through which to understand their own cultural awareness and awareness of their clients’ cultures; assess and apply knowledge in work with clients/client systems that is culturally grounded; and employ skills that demonstrate adaptation of multi-level intervention strategies to meet the needs of diverse populations.
- Ecological/Systems – MSW students apply the ecological/systems perspective to understand their clients/client systems and the ways that their interactions with their environment shape their quality of life and to develop intervention strategies across all levels of the environment.
- Empowerment/Strengths – MSW students focus on the strengths of their clients/client systems and draw on those strengths to empower and create positive social change.

Social Construction – MSW students critique diverse realities of knowledge, underlying assumptions, and interactions to understand the lives of their clients/client systems and the communities in which they live and work.

Culturally Competent Social Work Processes

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	CRITICAL INQUIRY AND REFLECTION	MULTI- DIMENSIONAL CONTEXTUAL PERSPECTIVE	TRANSFORMATIONAL SOCIAL WORK
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- Social Responsibility – MSW students commit themselves to promoting

human rights and social and economic justice; adhering to the values and ethics of the social work profession; and committing themselves to the profession's enhancement and their own growth.

- Critical Inquiry and Reflection– MSW students use critical inquiry and reflection in their work with clients/client systems, drawing on theoretical perspectives and evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence while ensuring that services to clients are culturally responsive.
- Multidimensional Contextual Perspective – MSW students apply a multidimensional contextual perspective to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate their work with clients/client systems based on an understanding of the multidimensional nature of their diverse strengths, limitations, needs and injustices.
- Transformational Social Work - MSW Students are critically reflective, innovative, creative, and collaborative as they engage in social work practice that transforms individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in a changing environment.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES AND COMPONENT BEHAVIORS

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the national social work education organization that accredits social work programs, has developed policy and accreditation standards that are used to accredit social work programs. The CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) are organized around the following perspective about the social work profession:

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally. (CSWE, 2015, p. 5)

CSWE requires that all programs graduate students that have demonstrated mastery of specific competencies and component behaviors at the generalist level. Each social work program then develops component behaviors at the specialist level unique to the program, its context, and the client populations its graduates are most likely to serve. The program's unique mission and conceptual framework shape the specialized competencies and component behaviors. UTSA's Social Work Program has one concentration, cultural competence, which includes both micro and macro practice.

Core competencies and component behaviors include:

Generalist Competencies and Component Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the

importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

G1.1 Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;

G1.2 Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

G1.3 Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

G1.4 Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

G2.1 Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and

G2.2 Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational

status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression. Social workers:

G3.1 Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and

G3.2 Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences

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

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Social workers:

G4.1 Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and

G4.2 Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects well-being, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and

global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings. Social workers:

G5.1 Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and

G5.2 Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

G6.1 Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and

G6.2 Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making. Social workers:

G7.1 Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and

G7.2 Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings. Social workers:

G8.1 Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and

G8.2 Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

G9.1 Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and

G9.2 Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Specialized Competencies and Component Behaviors

Specialized Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence recognize that historical and current contexts of oppression shape institutions, social work, and their evolving worldview and personal experiences. Recognizing that this context influences their professional judgment and behavior, they use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities. They use multiple frameworks to engage in critical inquiry and reflection to provide ethical, anti-racist, anti-oppressive and culturally responsive practice, policy, and research. They formulate and apply anti-racist, anti-oppressive, culturally responsive strategies to ethically respond to dilemmas across multidisciplinary settings. They appreciate the importance of being socially responsible in their practice with diverse populations including the centrality of social, economic, racial, and environmental justice. They anticipate how ethics, practice, and culture may be incongruent, thus perpetuating social, environmental, and economic injustice and human rights violations. When formulating and communicating culturally responsive professional judgments, they use the multidimensional contextual perspective and social construction to synthesize, evaluate, and adapt knowledge from multiple sources. They understand the unique roles of social work with diverse and underserved populations within interprofessional settings. Social workers with specialized, advanced cultural competence value the importance of enhancing the profession's and their work with diverse populations, which requires dedication to continuous life-long learning and development. They also take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for one's ongoing capacity for ethical social work. Key to this practice is an awareness that self-care includes ongoing reflection and development of individual and collective practices that enable it. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S1.1 Select and adapt ethical decision-making strategies to be anti-racist, anti-oppressive, culturally responsive.

S1.2 Ensure professional judgment and behavior by using critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, biases, affective/emotional responses, and influences of personal experiences in relation to ethical decision-making.

S1.3 Evaluate interprofessional and social work roles and boundaries with attention to diversity, social justice, and professional standards.

S1.4 Demonstrate ethical and culturally competent use of technology in practice, policies, and service delivery.

S1.5 Articulate strategies for lifelong learning and development that include assessment of their knowledge, beliefs, values, and skills.

S1.6 Articulate strategies for self-care, which include understanding the interconnectedness of individual and community wellbeing.

Specialized Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence are knowledgeable

about the interconnected global and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. They critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege and translate (a) their understanding of global interconnectedness of oppression and (b) their commitment to social, economic, and environmental justice into practice. They advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, striving for equitable distribution of social resources, rights, and responsibilities. They apply social constructionism, intersectionality, the multidimensional contextual perspective, ecological/systems, and empowerment/strengths theories to their practice to advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They understand that transformational culturally competent social work must address the global interconnections of human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S2.1 Advocate and engage with diverse clients and constituencies with attention to advancing human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, and promoting social change from a local/global perspective.

S2.2 Understand that culturally responsive advocacy and engagement plans must address oppressive structural barriers and ensure equitable distribution of social goods, rights, and responsibilities.

S2.3 Understand global interconnections of justice and human rights to critically evaluate their own roles, positionalities, and local practice context while engaging and advocating with diverse client systems.

S2.4 Acknowledge the role of social work in confronting its involvement in interconnected local and global historical harms that perpetuate oppression and racism to inform practice that advances human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Specialized Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. They know how to apply intersectionality and the multidimensional contextual perspective to understand diversity and difference in practice including the interaction of client and environmental factors, and the impact of oppression, discrimination, injustices, and power and privilege differentials. They understand that the social construction of difference includes marginalization, creation of oppressive structures, and the privileging of knowledge and resources. They understand structural competence, cultural responsiveness and cultural humility as central to cultural competence. They understand dimensions of diversity as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. They

recognize the importance of ongoing critical reflection, self-evaluation, self-regulation, and self-correction to provide culturally competent and just practice, policy, research, and service delivery. They understand how their own and others' experiences as targets or agents of oppression, discrimination, micro aggressions, and power and privilege differentials influence professional relationships, including the dialogic process with diverse clients, stakeholders, and colleagues. They feel a sense of personal agency in addressing these issues. They understand that cultural competence is not an endpoint but a life-long process including knowing how to learn about diverse and marginalized groups as well as our evolving response to them. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S3.1 Engage in dialogues about differences in culture, power, racism, and privilege with colleagues, stakeholders, and clients across multidisciplinary settings with an understanding of societal and historical roots of pervasive oppression.

S3.2 Demonstrate ability to guide their own learning and practice about diverse intersections of marginalized groups by taking the posture of learner with client as expert (for example, through use of ethnographic interviewing).

S3.3. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

S3.4 Demonstrate knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice using cultural humility and recognition that the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

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

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence understand the importance of engaging diverse stakeholders/clients in planning and conducting culturally responsive research using culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches to generate evidence-based and practice-based knowledge. They understand how to critically analyze and address issues of power and privilege differentials and adapt research methods to ensure that research is culturally relevant and just. They value the importance of cultural competence in research conduct and understand the inherent bias in all ways of knowing, including research. They evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Specifically, transformational culturally competent social workers understand how to apply the principles of critical inquiry to differentially analyze, select, interpret, and adapt theoretical, evidence based, and practice-based findings and local knowledge to inform practice. They are able to interpret, articulate, and share findings of research syntheses like meta-analyses or qualitative meta-syntheses. They understand how community-based participatory research empowers stakeholders to learn how to conduct their own research and identify community strengths, problems, and needs. They understand how personal,

professional, societal, and cultural values, beliefs, and biases may influence cultural responsiveness of the research process. They understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S4.1 Analyze power, privilege, and bias in research design, analysis, and interpretation, evaluating their impact on practice through anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives.

S4.2 Differentially apply research skills and knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research to conduct culturally competent and just research, including community-based participatory research.

S4.3 Use critical inquiry to synthesize, interpret, articulate, and differentially adapt evidence-based and practice-based findings and client-based/indigenous knowledge to provide effective culturally responsive and just practice, policy, and service delivery to a variety of clients and constituencies.

S4.4 Conduct ethical, culturally competent, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practice-informed research and research-informed practice and strategies by engaging in critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, personal values, emotional/affective responses, implicit and explicit biases as they pertain to research.

Specialized Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence draw on their knowledge of social construction and a multidimensional contextual perspective to actively engage in anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice that promotes culturally responsive systems change. They recognize how power and privilege shape policy and pay attention to diverse and intersecting circumstances, problems, needs, and injustices in policy practice. They recognize and critique the history of social policies and services and their impact on marginalized groups, including social movements and special interest groups. They can assess proposed and existing policies at the local, state, federal, and global level to determine the impact on diverse individuals and groups. They can advocate for social change and engage stakeholders/constituency groups in the change process. As transformational culturally competent social workers, they understand the importance of providing leadership and advocating for culturally responsive, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive policies and services that promote social, environmental, and economic justice and empower clients/constituency groups to lead and advocate as well. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S5.1 Influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation recognizing how power and privilege shape policy with attention to diverse and intersecting circumstances, problems, needs, and injustices, and actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice

S5.2 Articulate advocacy approaches that address advancement of human rights and social,

economic, and environmental justice from a cultural and global perspective.

S5.3 Act as change agents, in collaboration with stakeholders/clients, to promote provision of sustainable, culturally responsive services.

S5.4 Demonstrate understanding of the cultural responsiveness of local, state, federal, and global level policies that impact social service delivery and access by assessing social welfare policies using social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses.

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

Social workers who have specialized in transformational culturally competent practice; know how to draw on their understanding of social construction and multidimensional contextual, ecological/systems, and empowerment/strengths perspectives as well as human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary theories. They use self-reflective tools and strategies that assess how bias, power, and privilege, as well as personal values and personal experiences, may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies on local and global levels. They use self-reflective tools and strategies that assess how bias, power, and privilege, as well as personal values and personal experiences, may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies on local and global levels. They use self-reflective tools and strategies that assesses how bias, power, and privilege as well as personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies on local and global levels.

They understand the ongoing engagement process from a range of practice theories and approaches that promote social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppressive lens for culturally responsive engagement with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in local and global contexts.

They value the importance of relationships and collaborative partnerships when engaging clients and client systems. To ensure cultural responsiveness with clients/client systems served, they know how to use critical inquiry augmented by the anti-oppressive, anti-racist, and socially just multidimensional contextual perspective and social construction to synthesize, adapt, and evaluate multiple sources of knowledge about engagement strategies. Such strategies include evidence-based, practice-based, theoretically based, multidisciplinary, and client-based/Indigenous perspectives. Culturally competent social workers understand the influence of power and privilege differentials, diversity, and social, economic, and environmental justice upon the engagement process. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S6.1 Value the centrality of empathy, self-reflection, understandings of bias, power, and privilege, their personal values and personal experiences, and interpersonal skills while engaging and collaborating in culturally responsive practice with diverse clients and constituencies in local and global contexts.

S6.2 Engage individuals, families, and groups as partners in the change process with attention to power and privilege differentials, diversity, and social, economic, and environmental justice drawn from local and global historical knowledge.

S6.3 Engage organizations and communities as partners in the change process with attention to power and privilege differentials, diversity, and social, economic, and environmental justice.

S6.4 Use critical inquiry to synthesize and differentially adapt engagement skills from theoretical, evidence-based, practice-based, and local and global indigenous knowledge to provide culturally responsive engagement to clients/client systems.

S6.5 Ensure culturally responsive engagement practices by using critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, implicit and explicit biases, affective/emotional responses, personal values, and influences of personal experiences arising during engagement processes.

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

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence know assessment skills and techniques from a range of theories and practice drawn from local and global approaches and understand how to synthesize and differentially adapt them to provide culturally responsive assessment to diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. They draw on their understandings of social construction and multidimensional contextual, ecological/systems, and empowerment/strengths perspectives as well as human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary theories that promote social justice, anti-racism, and anti-oppressive lens to assess clients and stakeholders. They value the centrality of relationships and collaborative partnerships when assessing clients/client systems.

They know how to use critical inquiry augmented by the multidimensional contextual perspective and social construction to synthesize, differentially adapt, and evaluate multiple sources of knowledge, including evidenced based, practice based, theoretically based, and client-based/indigenous assessment and goal setting strategies to ensure cultural competence with clients/client systems served. They understand how to apply this knowledge to assess the influences of socially constructed structures, social systems and culture upon the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups, and the communities in which they reside. Culturally competent social workers understand how assessment processes are influenced by power and privilege differentials, diversity, and social, economic, and environmental justice and demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon intervention plan. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S7.1 Collaborate with clients and constituencies to assess cultural strengths, limitations, and challenges, and how these impact client/client system functioning, and integrate understanding of these assessment findings, respecting client's self-determination. Building from this

collaborative assessment to develop mutually agreed-upon intervention plans.

S7.2 Select, evaluate, adapt, and implement multidimensional assessment methods for individuals, families, and groups with attention to cultural responsiveness, using critical inquiry to draw on a range of theories and practice approaches, evidence-based and practice-based findings, and client-based/ indigenous knowledge, and integrate findings into culturally responsive intervention plans.

S7.3 Conduct environmental assessments of organizations and communities with attention to diverse and intersecting circumstances, problems, needs, and injustices, using critical inquiry to draw on a range of theories and practice approaches, evidence-based and practice-based findings, and client-based/indigenous knowledge, and integrate findings into culturally responsive intervention plans for organizations and communities.

S7.4 Assess clients/client systems with cultural responsiveness by using critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, implicit and explicit biases, personal values, affective/emotional responses, and influences of personal experiences in relation to assessment processes.

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

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence master intervention skills and techniques from a range of theories and practice approaches. They understand how to select, differentially adapt them. Apply an anti-racist and anti-oppressive lens to provide culturally responsive interventions to diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. They draw on understanding of social construction and multidimensional contextual, ecological/systems, and empowerment/strengths perspectives as well as human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary theories to intervene. They value the centrality of relationships and collaborative partnerships when intervening with clients/client systems. They know how to engage in critical inquiry to synthesize, adapt, and evaluate multiple sources of knowledge, including evidenced-based, practice-based, theory-based, and client-based/indigenous knowledge to ensure culturally competent, and inclusive interventions with clients/client systems. They understand how to apply this knowledge when intervening with clients/client systems. Culturally competent social workers understand the influence of power and privilege differentials, diversity, and social, economic, and environmental justice when intervening with clients/client systems. Social workers who specialize in transformational culturally competent practice commit to understanding and drawing on culturally responsive models of change to inform their interventions and transitions. Social workers incorporate points of assessment that are bound in a cultural humility perspective to identify appropriate points of transition in practice and client grounded termination plans. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S8.1 Use critical inquiry to evaluate, synthesize, adapt, and implement culturally responsive intervention skills and techniques from a range of theories and practice approaches, evidence

based and practice-based findings, and client-based/indigenous knowledge.

S8.2 Differentially use intervention approaches that leverage indigenous helping strategies and natural

support systems.

S8.3 Facilitate transitions and endings with attention to power differentials, diversity, and social justice. Utilizing culturally responsive models of change to inform understanding of intervention plan and transitions in practice approach when appropriate.

S8.4 Provide intervention that is culturally responsive by using critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, implicit and explicit biases, personal values, affective/emotional responses, and influences of personal experiences throughout intervention processes with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

S8.5 Apply EBP and PBE measures that are person centered and apply a cultural humility approach to inform the change process and determine the efficacy of the termination plan.

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

Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence understand the importance of ongoing evaluation to ensure effectiveness and cultural responsiveness. They know how to use the multidimensional contextual perspective and synthesis of ecological/systems, social construction, and empowerment/strengths conceptual frameworks in evaluation. Social Worker's incorporate evaluative approaches that are person-centered and acknowledge that collaborative interprofessional frameworks are a necessity for a thorough conceptualization of client issues. They recognize that commonly used evaluation tools may not be culturally responsive and may require adaptation with the populations served. They understand culturally responsive interpretation of findings and implications for improving services as a collaborative process with clients and stakeholders. They understand that engaging in transformational culturally competent practice requires an evaluative process that incorporates anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives, recognizing the influence of generational and systemic oppression and marginalization may have on clients and issues they experience. They recognize, analyze, and address challenges of quantitative and qualitative evaluations of interventions in relation to diversity, power and privilege differentials, and social, economic, and environmental justice. Social workers with specialized knowledge in transformational culturally competent practice awareness of the challenges in efficacy in evaluating diverse community's and issues and apply a critically evaluative lens to evaluation plan and process. Creating an evaluative approach to practice that is culturally responsive and grounded in an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers who have specialized in transformational cultural competence:

S9.1 Use critical inquiry informed by an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective to analyze and differentially adapt evaluation tools with attention to cultural competence and responsiveness.

S9.2 Formulate strategies to collaborate with client/client systems in the evaluation process, interpretation of findings, and application of findings to improve cultural competence and practice effectiveness at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

S9.3 Use evaluative strategies that are client centered and incorporate collaborative/interprofessional frameworks for conceptualizing client issues /needs.

S9.4 Evaluate in ways that are culturally responsive by using an anti-racist and anti-oppression perspective, critical reflection, self-regulation, and self-correction of their beliefs, implicit and explicit biases, personal values, emotional/affective responses, and influences of personal experiences when evaluating practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

National Association of Social Workers (approved 1996, revised 2017). *Code of Ethics for Social Workers*. Washington, DC: NASW;

International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work. (2004). *Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles Retrieved January 7, 2020 from <http://www.ifsw.org>*

Assessment of Student Mastery of Competencies and Component Behaviors

Competencies and component behaviors are incorporated in all courses throughout the curriculum.

Each course has uniform competency assignments that are used to measure student progress in mastering specific competencies. Faculty provide a similar assessment of each student's progress in courses they teach. Each semester that students complete the field practicum, students, faculty liaisons, and field instructors all assess individual student mastery of competencies and component behaviors. Additionally, the last semester students are enrolled in generalist coursework, they complete an overall assessment of their mastery of all generalist competencies and a self-reflection assignment drawing on a portfolio of their work compiled throughout their tenure in the Program. This self-assessment is used in conjunction with grades and other information such as performance in the field practicum to determine whether students are prepared to move to the specialized sequence of courses. A similar process is used during the last semester the student is in the Program to determine mastery of specialized competencies as the student moves toward graduation.

MSW CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

Grounded by its concentration in cultural competence, the UTSA MSW curriculum is organized

around a model of transformational pedagogy, supporting a learning process that helps social work students develop as “transformative intellectuals who are both active, reflective scholars and practitioners” (Sleeter, 1993, p. ix, cited in Brown, 2005, p. 135). Pedagogical strategies throughout the curriculum incorporate the examination of competing epistemological values, experiences, beliefs, and world views through experience, discussion, and critical reflection (Brown, 2005) and focus on the application of theoretical knowledge, skills and values in a learner-centered environment. The Program builds on a liberal arts perspective and integrates the Program themes, values, theoretical/conceptual frameworks, and competencies and practice behaviors that together comprise the overall curriculum design.

The organization of the UTSA MSW Program consists of 60 semester credit hours (SCHs). Students complete a 24-SCH professional generalist curriculum with courses required as prerequisites to a subsequent 27-SCH specialized curriculum. Two additional courses specific to the UTSA MSW Program’s mission and goals and one elective are required for both 60-SCH students and advanced standing students.

Prior to entering the specialized curriculum, all students in the MSW Program must demonstrate mastery of generalist competencies and component behaviors essential to a generalist social work perspective by either completing the generalist year of the MSW curriculum or by earning a baccalaureate degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Students also must complete a course in cultural competence, one of the two Program-specific courses that incorporate both generalist and specialized component behaviors, as a way to ensure that they have the requisite content for specialized coursework in the concentration.

MSW Curriculum Structure for 60-Semester Credit Hour Program

24 SCH		Generalist Curriculum Courses
3		Human Behav and the Social Environ (HBSE): Dynamics of Indiv and Families
3		Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis
3		Research Course
9		3 Generalist Practice
6		2 Generalist Field Practicum
*27 SCH		Specialized Curriculum Courses
12		4 Specialized Practice
6		2 Specialized Field Practicum
3		Specialized Policy Course
3		Specialized Research
3		Specialized Selective Course
*6 SCH		Additional Courses Particular to Program Mission and Goals
3		Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations
3		Global Context of Social Work
*3 SCH		Elective Courses
3		Open Elective

*Completed by all students

MSW Program Degree Plan Options

Students entering the UTSA MSW Program generally complete the Program requirements on a part-time (6 semester credit hours) or full-time (9 semester credit hours) basis. BSW graduates may enter the advanced standing program on either a part-time or full-time basis.

All classes in the program have a registration hold that requires students to be individually cleared before registering. Each semester, during the advising period, students must review their degree plan and confirm whether they are requesting any changes. If no changes are needed, they should notify the administrative associate (usually via survey) so the registration hold can be removed.

To maintain consistent cohorts and foster community, **degree plan changes are only approved in cases of significant and unavoidable circumstances.** If a modification is necessary, students work with the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) in the Office of Student Services to explore options. Once the GAR reviews and approves the revised plan, the student will be cleared to register.

Degree plans for 60-hour students taking 6 and 9 hours and for part-time and full-time advanced standing students who enter the program in the fall semester are shown on the following pages. Students on probationary status are required to enroll as part-time students. Additional degree plan options are available as well in consultation with the Graduate Advisor of Record, including an accelerated full-time plan, allowing 60-hour students to complete the program in 6 semesters, 36- hour students to complete the program in 3 semesters, individualized plans allowing students to start with a single course and modified degree plan options for students transferring to the UTSA MSW program from other accredited MSW programs. Due to CSWE Accreditation standards, students are required to complete all course work within 6 years.

Cultural Competence Curriculum for Master of Social Work Degree

60 Semester Credit Hour Program (SCH)

Degree Plan: Part-time, Fall Entry 6 SCH per Semester / 10 semesters

Semester	Course Numbers and Titles
Fall I 6 SCH	5013 Human Behavior and Social Environment: Dynamics of Individuals and Families 5103 Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis
Spring I 6 SCH	5513 Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations 5113 Generalist Social Work Practice
Summer I 6 SCH	5203 Social Work Research 5233 Global Context of Social Work
Fall II 6 SCH	5303 Social Work Methods: Foundations of Social Work I 5403 Generalist Field Practicum I and Integrative Seminar
Spring II 6 SCH	5313 Social Work Methods: Foundations of Social Work III 5413 Generalist Field Practicum II and Integrative Seminar
Summer II 6 SCH	5473 Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy 5463 Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups
Fall III 6 SCH	5493 Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice Selective: 5483 Multidimensional Assessment or 5633 Transformational Leadership in Social Work
Spring III 6 SCH	Elective 5523 Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families
Summer III 6 SCH	5423 Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar 5443 Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals
Fall IV 6 SCH	5243 Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation 5433 Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar

Sample degree plan--subject to change. Please consult the Graduate Advisor of Record for the most recent version.

Cultural Competence Curriculum for Master of Social Work Degree

60 Semester Credit Hour Program (SCH)

Degree Plan: Full-time, Fall Entry 9 SCH per Semester / 7 semesters

Semester	Course Numbers and Titles
Fall I 9 SCH	5013 Human Behavior and Social Environment: Dynamics of Individuals and Families 5103 Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis 5113 Generalist Practice
Spring I 9 SCH	5513 Cultural Competence with Diverse Populations 5303 Social Work Methods I 5403 Generalist Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar
Summer I 9 SCH	5313 Social Work Methods II 5413 Generalist Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar Elective
Fall II 9 SCH	5203 Social Work Research 5233 Global Context of Social Work Selective: 5483 Multidimensional Assessment OR 5633 Transformational Leadership in Social Work
Spring II 9 SCH	5493 Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice 5463 Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups 5523 Specialized Social Work Methods: Children & Families
Summer II 6 SCH	5423 Specialized Field Practicum III & Integrative Seminar 5443 Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals
Fall III 9 SCH	5473 Specialized Policy Practice and Advocacy 5433 Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar 5243 Specialized Social Work Research: Theoretical Practice & Program Evaluation

Sample degree plan--subject to change. Please consult the Graduate Advisor of Record for the most recent version.

Cultural Competence Curriculum for Master of Social Work Degree

Advanced Standing Program

Degree Plan: Part-time, Fall Entry

6 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) Per Semester / 6 semesters

Semester	Course Numbers and Titles
Fall I 6 SCH	5513 Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations 5493 Specialized Social Work Methods: Community
Spring I 6 SCH	5523 Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families 5233 Global Context of Social Work
Summer I 6 SCH	5463 Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups Elective
Fall I 6 SCH	Selective: 5483 Multidimensional Assessment or 5633 Transformational Leadership in Social Work 5473 Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy
Spring II 6 SCH	5423 Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar 5443 Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals
Summer II 6 SCH	5433 Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar 5243 Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation

Sample degree plan-- subject to change. Please consult your Program Advisor for the most recent version.

Cultural Competence Curriculum for Master of Social Work Degree

Advanced Standing Program

Degree Plan: Full-time, Fall Entry

9 Semester Credit Hours (SCH) Per Semester /4 semesters

Semester	Course Numbers and Titles
Fall I 9 SCH	5513 Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations Selective: 5483 Multidimensional Assessment or 5633 Transformational Leadership in Social Work 5493 Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice
Spring I 9 SCH	5233 Global Context of Social Work 5523 Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families 5463 Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups
Summer I 9 SCH	5423 Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar 5443 Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals Elective
Fall II 9 SCH	5433 Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar 5243 Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation 5473 Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy

Sample degree plan--subject to change. Please consult the Graduate Advisor of Record for the most recent version.

Generalist Curriculum

The generalist curriculum consists of eight courses: Human Behavior and the Social Environment: Dynamics of Individuals and Families, Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis, Generalist Social Work Practice, Social Work Research, Social Work Methods: Foundations of Social Work I, Generalist Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar I, Social Work Methods: Foundations of Social Work II, and Generalist Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar II. Students also complete Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations, which incorporates both generalist and specialized component behaviors, while a generalist student. Full-time students complete the generalist field practicum concurrently over two semesters during the first year. Students enrolled part-time complete their generalist year courses over two calendar years, with the generalist field practicum taken in the second year of the three- year part-time option.

The overarching goal of the generalist curriculum is to provide students with the values, knowledge, and skills of generalist practice which then serve as an underpinning for the specialized values, knowledge and skills attained during the specialized cultural competence concentration. The Program curriculum incorporates the 9 competencies and 31 component behaviors at the generalist level, with assessment mechanisms built in to measure mastery of generalist component behaviors prior to moving to specialized coursework.

Discrete Generalist Courses Specific to Core Curriculum Content Areas

Human Behavior and the Social Environment	5013 Dynamics of Individuals and Families
Social Welfare Policy and Services	5103 Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis
Social Work Practice	5113 Generalist Practice 5303 Social Work Methods: Foundations of Practice I 5313 Social Work Methods: Foundations of Practice II
Social Work Research	5203 Social Work Research
Field Education	5403 Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar 5413 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar

A generalist social work perspective incorporates ecological/systems and empowerment/strengths perspectives that allow social workers to intervene at multiple levels of the environment (individuals, families, groups, organizations, neighborhoods, communities, and societies). The generalist perspective is based on four premises: First, human behavior is inextricably connected to the social and physical environment; second, opportunities for enhancing the functioning of any human system include changing the system itself, modifying its interactions with the environment, and altering other systems within its environment; third, work with any level of a human system – from individual to society – uses similar processes; and finally, generalist practitioners have responsibilities beyond direct practice to work toward just social policies as well as to conduct and apply research. (Miley, et al., 2009, p. 11)

All generalist courses focus on specific identified competencies and component behaviors and

integrate content that provides the underpinning for the specialized concentration in cultural competence. Generalist courses also include content on diversity, populations-at-risk, and social and economic justice and human rights (See Social Work Department course descriptions in Appendix of this *Handbook*).

At the end of each semester, students and faculty assess mastery of component behaviors assigned to specific courses. This information is then analyzed to identify discrepancies and identified concerns are then discussed by the respective curriculum committees, with any suggested curriculum changes brought to the full faculty for consideration. Additionally, students evaluate themselves and are evaluated by their field instructor on all 9 competencies and 31 component behaviors at the end of their generalist coursework.

Specialized Culturally Competent Practice

Specialized curriculum content builds upon both the liberal arts perspective and the MSW generalist curriculum. Preparation for specialized practice goes beyond that of the generalist curriculum in significant ways. Although built upon a generalist curriculum, advanced content extends the depth, breadth, and specificity of generalist content. Generalist courses ground MSW students in values, knowledge, and skills of a generalist social work perspective to practice across systems at the individual, family, group, organization, and community levels. The specialized curriculum prepares social work graduates for specialized culturally competent social work practice.

The specialized curriculum emphasizes the conceptualization, design, and differential application of alternative ways of data gathering, analysis, planning, intervention, and evaluation. Specialized practice knowledge and skills require a higher degree of creativity and judgment and a more sophisticated use of self in situations characterized by ambiguity, rigidity or rapid change, complexity, conflict, ethical dilemmas, client or system vulnerability, and often limited time and resources. Specialized practitioners are self-critical and can qualitatively and quantitatively evaluate the efficacy of their actions. They hold themselves responsible for their own growth and development and that of their profession. They practice with a higher degree of autonomy than those possessing the BSW or those having completed only the generalist year of the MSW degree.

Specialized Curriculum Structure

The specialized culturally competent social work concentration incorporates the 9 competencies reflected by the 2022 EPAS as well as 20 specialized component behaviors specific to our concentration. The concentration includes the following components:

Discrete Specialized Courses Specific to Core Curriculum Content Areas

Specialized Practice Courses	Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals; Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families; Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups; and Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice
Specialized Selective Courses	Choice of either Multidimensional Assessment or Transformational Leadership in Social Work
Specialized Research Course	Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation
Specialized Policy Course	Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy
Specialized Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar Courses	Specialized field practicum and integrative seminar courses – Specialized Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar III and Specialized Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar IV

In keeping with our conceptualization of culturally competent social work, the UTSA MSW Program does not offer dichotomized micro direct and macro concentrations (students are able to pursue particular content through focus on competency assignments in required courses and completion of directed research/independent study courses). We believe that specialized culturally competent social work professionals need advanced cultural awareness, knowledge, and practice skills across both direct and macro systems. Specialized level MSW students learn to apply highly differentiated and discriminating knowledge and ethical skills; they develop their capacity for critical thinking and the skills necessary for the scientific and analytical evaluation of all aspects and conditions of their practice; and they learn to function with more autonomy and self-direction in their commitment to advance their own professional competence as socially responsible social workers in order to contribute to the strengthening of community.

All students must have completed their generalist coursework before enrolling in required specialized courses. They must also complete all generalist courses before entering the specialized field practicum. Field IV is the Program's capstone course for social work students in their specialized curriculum year.

Courses Particular to Program Mission and Goals

Two courses have been developed specific to the UTSA MSW program mission and goals: SWK 5513 Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations and SWK 5233 Global Context of Social Work. These two courses add strength to the generalist and specialized curricula. They were developed to assist UTSA MSW students in gaining values, knowledge, and skills specific to culturally competent social work practice with diverse populations within a local-global context.

Mission and Goal-Specific Courses	SWK 5513 Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations SWK 5233 Global Context of Social Work
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Selective and Electives

As part of the UTSA MSW Program’s inter-professional emphasis, students also choose one elective of 3 semester credit hours. They are free to choose an interdisciplinary elective from across the university that fits with their program of study. Many students choose to take both selective courses (Multidimensional Assessment or Transformational Leadership in Social Work), counting one as their elective. Unique electives are also offered within the Social Work Program when possible. Students also have the option of choosing to take an independent study course from one of our social work faculty in a topic area of that faculty member’s respective expertise. Students may also choose as their elective course to take a graduate level social work course (not offered at the UTSA MSW program) from another accredited MSW program for transfer credit. The transfer of graduate courses outside of UTSA must be approved by the UTSA Department of Social Work Graduate Advisor of Record.

Course descriptions for all courses are provided in the Appendices of this *Student Handbook*.

MSW PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Credit for Life and Work Experience

The UTSA MSW program will not grant academic course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Ensuring that Generalist Curriculum Content is Not Repeated

Students who possess a BSW from a Council on Social Work Education-accredited program but who were not granted advanced standing status may present evidence prior to registration that they have met the objectives of a social work generalist course with a grade of “B” or better. They then have the option of taking a course in its place, permitting them to avoid redundancy and enrich their program of work. Students who have course work in generalist curriculum content areas may also petition to have program course work waived and replaced with an additional course.

Students transferring from another accredited social work graduate program may also file a request to substitute a course or courses taken elsewhere for an equivalent course or courses offered in the UTSA Department of Social Work. The student must submit a course syllabus and transcript with the request. The MSW Program Chair, GAR, and the Graduate Program Committee, when appropriate, examine the course objectives, syllabi, content, learning activities, theoretical framework(s) used, and methods of evaluation to determine course equivalence.

Students may also submit documentation for non-social work graduate courses taken and

request an evaluation of course equivalency by the Graduate Program Committee. UTSA policy usually limits transfer credit to no more than 6 graduate semester credit hours with a grade of “B” or better. Credit cannot be granted if the course was counted toward another already-completed degree.

The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the modified MSW degree option is 36, exclusive of MSW coursework with a grade of “C” or below.

Transfer Credit

There are two levels of policy regarding the transfer of credit, one at the University and the other at the Departmental level.

Department of Social Work Transfer Credit Policies:

A modified MSW degree option is available for transfer students who successfully complete a minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours in a CSWE-accredited master of social work program. The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the modified MSW degree option is 36, exclusive of MSW coursework with a grade of “C” or below. For modified MSW Program admission, the applicant must meet Program admission requirements, and in addition:

- have a grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 semester credit hours of undergraduate coursework as well as any graduate level social course work previously completed;
- reference letter from the MSW program director/chair attesting to status of good standing in MSW program
- when transferring field practicum courses, the applicant must also provide the following:
 - additional reference letter from the MSW field director/coordinator or MSW program director, and
 - a copy of the BSW field evaluation form which indicates number of clock hours completed, final grade, description of practicum setting (includes community and clientele served), and accomplishments as a practicum student;
 - Students transferring practicum courses must also be recommended for admission by the Department of Social Work Graduate Program Committee; and
 - Transfer grades of Pass/Fail will not be accepted for credit.

Students transferring from another accredited social work graduate program may also file a request to substitute a course or courses taken elsewhere for an equivalent course or courses offered in the UTSA Department of Social Work. The student must submit a course syllabus and transcript with the request. The MSW Program Chair and GAR and the Graduate Program Committee, when appropriate, examine the course objectives, syllabi, content, learning activities, theoretical framework(s) used, and methods of evaluation to determine the course

equivalence. Students may also submit documentation for non-social work graduate courses taken and request an evaluation of course equivalency by the Graduate Program Committee. UTSA policy usually limits transfer credit to no more than 6 graduate semester credit hours with a grade of B or better. Note that credit cannot be granted if the course was counted toward an already-earned degree.

The maximum number of semester credit hours to be transferred/waived from an accredited graduate social work program for Non BSW into this degree is 24. The maximum number of semester credit hours to be transferred/waived from an accredited graduate social work program for Advanced Standing degree is 6.

UTSA Transfer Policies:

UTSA's Transfer of Credit policy is set forth by the *UTSA Graduate Catalog 2019– 2021*:

<http://catalog.utsa.edu/graduate/mastersdegreeregulations/transferoftcredit/>

Limitations

Quantity

Ordinarily, all work for the master's degree must be completed at UTSA. Transfer credit of usually not more than 6 semester credit hours may be allowed for graduate coursework completed at another accredited institution upon the approval of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee in which the major area is located. Upon petition by the student, recommendation of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, a maximum of one-third of the semester credit hours of coursework (exclusive of thesis) required for a degree at UTSA may be accepted as transfer credit for the degree.

Time Limitation

All requirements for a master's degree must be completed within one six-year period.

Work over six years old may be reinstated only with the permission of the Dean of the Graduate School, upon recommendation of the Graduate Program Committee.

Evaluation of Courses

The Social Work Department's Graduate Advisor of Record and the college evaluate transcripts and designate which graduate courses are acceptable under the above provisions for transfer toward a master's degree at UTSA. Whether or not a course is transferable as graduate coursework is determined by the course number assigned by the institution awarding the credit. To be transferable to UTSA, courses must be defined as graduate courses at the institution where credit was earned. Courses that are defined as undergraduate upper-division by their course numbers, but that can be applied to a graduate degree at the institution awarding the credit, are not accepted for transfer toward a master's degree at UTSA. All work submitted for transfer credit must have been completed with grades of "A" or "B" and must have been completed no more than six years before the degree was awarded.

Transfers within The University of Texas System

It is the policy of The University of Texas System that all academic institutions within the System may accept graduate credit from each other, and the regular requirements for residency are adjusted accordingly. The applicability of specific courses from other University of Texas institutions to a student's graduate degree program at UTSA, however, must be approved by the appropriate Graduate Program Committee.

Course Types and Acceptability Accepted on a Limited Basis

- ***UTSA Undergraduate Courses.*** With the approval of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee, the Department Chair, and the Dean of the college in which the student expects to earn their degree, a candidate for the master's degree may apply a maximum of 6 semester credit hours of unduplicated credit for undergraduate upper-division (junior- or senior-level) courses completed at UTSA with the grades of "A" or "B" to a master's degree; no course below the upper-division level or with other grades may be applied to the degree.

Not Accepted

- ***Correspondence and Extension Courses.*** Courses completed by correspondence or extension may not be applied to a graduate degree program.
- ***Courses Counted for Another Degree.*** No courses counted toward another degree may be applied to a graduate degree, either directly or by substitution. The only exception is that candidates holding a Master of Arts degree in Art from another institution seeking admission to the Master of Fine Arts degree program may have up to 24 semester credit hours applied toward the M.F.A. degree exclusive of the thesis and/or degree project, upon recommendation of the department Graduate Program Committee and approval of the Dean of the Graduate School. Work completed for the master's degree may be included in the work for the doctoral degree, when it is offered, provided it is acceptable to the candidate's supervising committee, the appropriate Graduate Program Committee, and the Dean of the Graduate School.
- ***Credit by Examination.*** Credit by examination at UTSA is intended to enable undergraduate students to receive credit for courses leading to a bachelor's degree in which they may already have achieved the objectives. Credit cannot be earned by CEEB examination or by UT Challenge Examination for any courses used to meet minimum requirements for a graduate degree or graduate teacher certification program. Graduate degree-seeking students in the College of Business may challenge by examination any UTSA graduate-level "professional" or "background" course that is required in addition to minimum

degree requirements. (See the UTSA Credit by Examination brochure.)

Incompletes

In graduate courses, incomplete work must be made up no later than the end of the final examination period one year from the semester the Incomplete was received and before the student's graduation. If the work is not completed within this time, the "IN" is automatically changed to a grade of "F", and credit may be earned only when the student re-enrolls in the course and completes the entire course satisfactorily. The time limit does not apply to graduate-level thesis, internship, or dissertation courses, except that an "IN" cannot be removed after a degree is awarded. The time limit does apply to all other graduate courses, including special problems and independent study courses. Extenuating circumstances such as active military service will be eligible for exceptions.

Readmission after Enrollment Absence

UTSA master's students who have attended a semester but have not been in attendance for one full year are required to reapply and submit an application for graduate admission, and pay a nonrefundable application fee (see [application fee table](#)), by the application deadline.

Program Mentoring and Advising

The Social Work Program uses a four-level developmental mentoring and advising approach to academic advising: 1) transition, beginning where the student is and facilitating the transition to graduate school and the social work program and profession, understanding the learning environment and context, and focusing on available resources; 2) professional identity, which takes place while students are in generalist coursework, focusing on a beginning awareness of social work and identification with the profession, beginning to think about field practicum options, professional interests, and learning needs; and exploration of options for taking the free elective; 3) professional interests and goals, which usually takes place as the student moves from generalist to specialized coursework; an assessment of strengths and learning needs/identified gaps and plans to address them; and beginning exploration of specialized field placement ideas and future career options; and 4) graduation and life-long learning, which occurs during the student's last semesters in the program and focuses on life-long learning, career goals and interests, job search and/or more graduate education, preparation for the licensing exam, and making the transition to becoming a transformative, culturally competent social work practitioner. Each student is assigned a faculty mentor, who also serves as the student's advocate and is available should the student experience any concerns

The mentoring and advising relationship with the student begins during the admissions process, when the GAR and administrative support staff have a chance to interact with many students during meetings for prospective applicants. Once admitted to the Program, students initially work with the GAR and administrative support staff around degree planning and registration for the first semester. At the time the new student submits an acknowledgment form indicating attendance and the number of hours s/he wishes to take each semester, a degree plan is developed and sent

to the student showing suggested courses to be taken until the student completes the degree, with courses for the first semester highlighted and instructions about how to register. If the student has questions or special needs, s/he interacts with the GAR .

Faculty Mentors

Students are assigned a faculty mentor at the time of new student orientation; this mentor serves as a resource for the student during her/his tenure in the program. Students are highly encouraged to meet with their mentor once per semester, however, this meeting is voluntary. Students who are on academic probation, however, are required to meet at least once a month with their faculty mentor. Students can meet with their faculty mentors to discuss developmental issues regarding the student's well-being and progress in the program, career interests, academic history, current academic progress, and future plans. Faculty mentors do not work with students around revising their degree plans nor the sequence of coursework taken.

Changing Degree Plans and Sequence of Coursework and Registration

Prior to registration for the coming semester, each student is asked to review their degree plan and develop an appropriate schedule for the following semester. If the student determines that there are no changes to be made to the plan, s/he notifies the administrative associate via email. The administrative associate then clears the student's registration hold and notifies the student. Once the hold is cleared, the student can register during designated UTSA registration periods. If a student wishes to change her/his degree plan, the student notifies the Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) by email or in person. The GAR reviews the request, modifies the student's degree plan if approved, notifies the student, and sends the student a copy of the revised degree plan. The administrative associate then clears the student's registration and notifies the student she/he can register. Students planning to enter Field Practicum in the next semester must be approved for entry by the Director or Coordinator of Field Education (see field portion of for requirements).

Graduate Advisor of Record

The Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR), in coordination with the Graduate Program Committee, is responsible for advising policies and procedures for all social work students, particularly in terms of developing and implementing a student degree plan to ensure timely completion of the program's requirements. The GAR has the major responsibility for technical academic advising and participates in professional advising. As lead for the Office of Student Services, the GAR serves as the main point of contact for admissions, student advisement, student conduct, student records administration, and the department representative in most matters pertaining to graduate student progress through the program.

MSW Student Evaluation Criteria

The Department of Social Work administrators and faculty are committed to ensure the successes of the graduate social work students upon admission to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program. The faculty and administrators also have a responsibility to determine a student's readiness to enter the social work profession. Therefore, the UTSA Department of Social Work

Student Standards (see Appendix) outlines policies and procedures for academic expectations, including scholastic and professional expectations of students. These Standards have been reviewed by graduate social work students enrolled in our Program, faculty, and UTSA administrators.

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the Department of Social Work has different expectations of students than doing non-professional programs. The Standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address academic and/or performance concerns. The ultimate goal of the Standards is to help students have a successful experience in the Department of Social Work.

Professional social work learning is an ongoing developmental process. The National Association of Social Workers, the national organization of the social work profession, sets forth a Code of Ethics for the profession, and a process for sanctioning social workers if they are found to have violated the code. Thus, it is critical that social work education programs serve as both socializers to and gatekeepers of the profession. Students are not expected to meet the criteria set forth in the Standards at the same performance level when they begin the program as when they leave it. Students, however, will continuously strive to achieve the academic (scholastic and professional) performance standard criteria appropriate for their respective developmental level. Faculty (including adjunct), administrators, field instructors, and community field liaisons will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if Standards are being met during a student's educational career, , utilizing the Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form where necessary. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of social work. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice of wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process.

All graduate Master of Social Work (MSW) students are personally responsible for reading, studying, and abiding by the following documents to educate themselves on social work professional standards as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners:

- *CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*
- *NASW Code of Ethics*
- *Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct*
- *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*
- *UTSA Department of Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual*
- *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form and Competency Review*

The above may be found in the Appendix section of the UTSA Department of Social Work Student

Handbook and Field Manual.

Students are asked to sign an individual acknowledgement form stating they have read, comprehend, and will adhere to the rules and standards set forth. The acknowledgement form is provided to students during the New Student Orientation, and all students must submit the form to the Social Work Office within two weeks of orientation. The form is kept as part of each student's Departmental academic file. Students who do not submit the form will have a registration hold placed until the form is submitted.

Additionally, students are also responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to policies and procedures in the following documents:

- The University of Texas System Rules and Regulations
- *UTSA Graduate Catalog*
- *UTSA Information Bulletin*

Students are evaluated in individual courses and the field practicum. Grades of A-F are assigned for each course based on student performance. Additionally, students, faculty, and field instructors assess student ability to master competencies and practice behaviors delineated by the Program each semester that the student is in the Program. An assessment of all nine competencies and 31 generalist component behaviors are completed at the end of the student's tenure in generalist coursework, with a similar assessment of all nine competencies and 20 specialized component behaviors completed at the end of the student's tenure in specialized coursework. Mastery of competencies and component behaviors is based on student's completion of competency assignments in each MSW course.

UTSA Graduate School Grading System

The Social Work Department follows the UTSA Graduate School grading system, outlined below. Further information is available through the Graduate Catalogue or online at:

<http://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/generalacademicregulations/grades/>

Grade Symbol	Grade Points
A+	4.00
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67

D+	1.33
D	1.00
D-	0.67
F	0

Procedures for Handling General Grievances

Graduate students are to refer to the University of Texas at San Antonio *Graduate Catalog* for grievance procedures. The first step is to try to resolve the issue with the person. Students may also consult with their faculty mentor or the Graduate Advisor of Record. If the situation is not resolved, a formal grievance may be filed with the Department Chair. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of the grievance, at that level, the next step is the Associate Dean of the College for Health, Community and Policy, then the Dean of the College for Health, Community and Policy, and finally, the Dean of the Graduate School. The Dean of the Graduate School is the final level of appeal.

University Policy Regarding Academic Dismissal

The *UTSA Department of Social Work Student Standards* (see appendix) provides detailed policies and procedures for review of student academic and professional performance, including performance that may result in dismissal from the program. The University of Texas at San Antonio also has a set of university-wide student standards relative to academic dismissal.

Per the *UTSA 2019 - 2021 Graduate Catalog*:

<http://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/generalacademicregulations/academicstanding/#Gracademicdismissal>

Academic dismissal occurs:

1. when a student at the graduate level earns a grade point average of less than 2.0 in any term.
2. when a student at the graduate level earns a grade of “F” in any course.
3. when a student at the graduate level is admitted on probation with conditions and fails to meet a condition
4. when a student at the graduate level who is on academic probation during a term would again be placed on academic probation under the provisions of academic probation set forth above. If, however, the student’s UTSA grade point average for the term is at least 3.0, he or she will continue academic probation.
5. when a student at the graduate level is unable to pass an oral or written exam (such as the Comprehensive Examination or Qualifying Examination) required for the degree after the maximum of two attempts. Some programs may have more stringent requirements.
6. when a student at the graduate level fails to make satisfactory progress toward the degree, as defined by University regulations and the regulations of the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

UTSA student rights and responsibilities include: constitutional rights, academic procedures, discipline procedures, and student records. The UTSA Student Code of Conduct may also be found on line: <http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/b.html>. The Code of Conduct includes: general provision, students standards of conduct, disciplinary penalties, initiation of disciplinary charges, hearing, disciplinary records, and appeal. The student Grievances section of the *University Catalog* is available at: <http://catalog.utsa.edu/search/?P=student+grievances> and includes: general grievance procedures, grade grievance procedures, and counseling services.

Students' Participation in Formulating and Modifying Policies

UTSA MSW students have actively participated in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs. Student feedback is sought regarding program development and curriculum issues through, student surveys, focus groups, discussions with mentors and instructors, and e-mail communication. Opportunities for students to participate in

decision-making as members of Department committees are also available. The results of this student feedback have resulted in major changes in the MSW curriculum and field education.

Social Work Student Organizations

Social Work Student Council

The Social Work Student Council works closely with the Department to engage students in community service projects, advocacy efforts, and social events. The Social Work Council communicates through Facebook @UTSASocialWorkCouncil, through Instagram @UTSAMSW, and also keeps students informed about activities through Department emails. The Council's goal is to provide service to the local community and connect UTSA's future social workers to those they will serve.

Chair's Student Advisory Group

The Chair's Student Advisory Group members represent all levels of the program, from students who recently started to students in their last semester. Through regular meetings, it provides opportunities for students to understand and influence Department governance processes and provides a direct communication path for students to advise the chair on various matters such as program curriculum and policies, and other issues of interest to the MSW student body.

Phi Alpha

Phi Alpha is a Social Work Honor Society that strives to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. The purpose of Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work. Further information can be found at the Society website: <https://phialpha.org/>.

STUDENT FIELD EDUCATION MANUAL

Introduction

Field education provides opportunities for the developing social work professional to connect the theoretical and conceptual knowledge gained in the classroom with a practice setting, providing an organizational and community context for and opportunities to develop skills in evidence-informed practice. As the signature pedagogy, field brings to life transformative culturally competent social work practice and is an integral part of curriculum design, implementation, and evaluation. It is anchored in the Program's vision, mission, values, goals, competencies, and practice behaviors.

The field practicum experience provides students with generalist and specialized practice opportunities for applying curriculum content in a "real world" practice setting. Within this teaching and learning environment, the student has opportunities for socialization into the social work profession, which includes identification with social work's purpose, values and ethics; application of critical thinking in making and communicating professional judgments; demonstrating understanding, affirmation, and respect for people from diverse backgrounds; advancing human rights and social and economic justice issues; analysis of the effect of social welfare policy on programs and services; opportunities for the development of research questions in relation to practice efforts and community engagement; critical reflection of the interactions and impact of the social environment on human behavior; responding to contexts that shape and inform practice; engaging, assessing, intervening and evaluating individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in social change processes; and opportunities for evaluation of self and practice interventions.

Field Administration

The Office of Field Education is comprised of the Director of Field Education, Coordinator of Field Education, BSW Field Coordinator, IV-E Field Coordinator, and Graduate assistants and/or work study students. The Department Chair works closely with the Field Office.

The Social Work Program Field Committee and the Field Community Advisory Committee advise the Field Program with respect to policies, procedures, and the planning of special programs, trainings, services, and field practicum experiences for students, service recipients, faculty, staff, field instructors, preceptors, and the community at large.

Meetings are held at least quarterly.

Structure of Field Education

The MSW field practicum generalist ↔ specialized curriculum continuum consists of two separate assignments for students without a Bachelor of Social Work Degree (BSW) that equal at least 900 clock hours. Students who are admitted as advanced standing students with a BSW degree complete a minimum of 450 clock hours of practicum experience at the specialized level.

Below you will find the four field practicum courses. Each course has a minimum requirement of a minimum of 225 clock hours:

Generalist:

SWK 5403 Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar
(FP I) SWK 5413 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar (FP II)

Specialized:

SWK 5423 Field Practicum III & Integrative Seminar (FP III)
SWK 5433 Field Practicum IV & Integrative Seminar (FP IV).

It is expected that students will be assigned at one practicum site for two semesters as they complete generalist field and a second practicum site for two semesters as they complete specialized field. Exceptions are discussed in the *Change of Field Assignment* section of this Manual. At the generalist and specialized field practicum levels, the clock hours are the same regardless of semester of entry. The weekly hours are structured as indicated in the table below.

Field Practicum Models: 225 Clock Hours per Semester

Semester	Fall August–December Fifteen Weeks	Spring January–May Fifteen Weeks	Summer June–August Ten Weeks
Weekly Clock Hours	15	15	22.5

The semester of entry is determined by the student’s degree plan. Students may enter generalist field in the fall and continue through the spring semester (August through May); or enter in the spring and continue through the summer (January through August). Students may enter specialized field in the fall and continue through the spring semester (August through May); in the spring and continue through the summer (January through August); or in the summer and continue through the fall (June through December). The specialized student also has an option of completing field under a “block” model in certain situations; that is the student will enroll in FP III & IV in the same semester. In the fall semester, the average weekly total of clock hours is 30. If block is available in the summer, weekly hours would be 40 hours for almost 11 weeks. It is important to note that a block placement is dependent upon a recommendation from the MSW Program Advisor, the availability of concurrent courses taken with field, and the availability of a site conducive to a block placement. It is recommended the student complete all specialized courses (except FP III, IV, and Specialized Research) prior to a block placement.

An Integrative Seminar component of the field practicum will begin with UTSA’s first day of class schedule. The Integrative Seminar is a structured class of just under two hours. It has its own

syllabus and assignments that are designed to integrate the practicum experience with classroom theory. Time spent in seminar and related assignments does not count towards practicum hours.

The structure of a typical semester is as follows:

Minimum of 225 clock hours per semester

Intern 15 hrs./week in Fall & Spring semesters; intern 22.3 hrs./week in Summer;

Students must intern a minimum of 10 hours per week. If a student has satisfied the 225 hours prior to the end of the semester, with the approval of the Field Instructor, the student may reduce their hours per week, but not under 10 hours per week.

Students are required to be at placement for a minimum of 3-hour blocks.

The student will meet with the approved field instructor for at least one clock hour per week for supervision. This weekly hour must be noted on the time sheet, and it is counted toward field hours.

FIELD PLACEMENT POLICIES

Starting Field Early

Although not all field placements are finalized prior to the beginning of the semester, the student is encouraged to accumulate hours before the official start of UTSA classes with special permission from the Field Office and their Field Instructor. Prior to the fall and spring semesters, the student may accumulate no more than 50 (fifty) clock hours. Seventy-five (75) hours may be accumulated prior to the summer session.

Requirements for Starting Field Early:

- The agency placement must be finalized and UTSA-Affiliation and Program agreements must be in place;
- The agency and field instructor must be in agreement;
- Student must submit all required documents to the Field Office;
- Student must show proof of student professional liability insurance;
- Student must be approved to enter field by social work faculty;
- Student must be in good academic standing without incompletes; and
- Student must be supervised by field instructor during “early” time period.

Starting field early does not allow the student to finish field early. Field education is closely tied to

the concurrent courses taken by students with assignments due until the published last day of field.

Clock Hours Ending Beyond the Published Due Dates

Occasionally, students are unable to complete the clock hours, demonstrate competencies by the end of the academic semester, or schedule the final evaluation. In these instances, the student will initiate the Projected Completion Form and submit it to the Field Office. This form requires signatures from the student, field instructor, and liaison. In these instances, the student will receive an incomplete grade until the hours are completed. If the student is in between field semesters, the student may not begin the next field semester (i.e. Field II or Field IV) until the incomplete grade has been cleared.

The Field Office will monitor monthly hours to ensure students are on track for successfully completing their hours by the end of the semester. The Field Office will notify students by email if their hours are off track for completion. The student is then responsible for furnishing a written plan for successful completion to the Field Office, Field Instructor, and the Liaison.

To receive an incomplete in Field, a student must have completed at least 75% of their practicum hours (168.75 out of 225). If 75% of the hours are not yet complete, the late completion request will be denied by the Field Office and the student risks a failing grade for Field. Once the hours are successfully completed, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Field Office of the completion. The Field Office will notify the Field Seminar Instructor of the completion and request a Change of Grade form be submitted for the student. If the student is in between field semesters, the student may not begin the next field semester until the incomplete has been cleared.

Professional and/or Agency Training

The agency may require the student to attend an orientation or specialized trainings.

These hours may be counted towards the clock hours, as they are seen as preparation for direct client contact. Additionally, the student may participate in social work professional training, but may only count a limited number toward clock hours. These trainings must be indicated in the *All-In-One*. The student may not count work done on classroom assignments, readings, or projects that are not directly related to field. Hours spent working at home or not at the field site are rare and must be approved in advance by the Field Office.

The All-In-One

The All-In-One is an instrument that combines the Educational Agreements and Final Evaluations for all 450 clock hours. Please refer to the *A Field Education Guide for MSW Students, Field Instructors, Faculty, and Staff*. This *Guide* gives a step-by-step process for completion of this document as well as providing examples of generalist and specialized tasks/assignments/work plan. It is organized by specialized and generalist levels with competencies and component behaviors. The competencies and generalist component behaviors are established by The Council on Social Work Education. The specialized competencies and component behaviors have

been created by UTSA social work faculty.

Placing and Monitoring Students Relationship Between Degree Plan and Field Practicum

Upon entering the Department of Social Work, all students are given a degree plan that has been approved by the Graduate Advisor of Record. The degree plan outlines semester-by- semester the courses a student is approved to take within the policy requirements of the Department of Social Work and is based on the student's enrollment status. Specifically, degree plans outline matriculation through the MSW program on a full-time (9 or 12 semester credit hours [SCH]) or part-time (6 SCH) basis in given semesters. There are explicit requirements regarding the sequences of and prerequisites for courses, including field practicum courses. Any variation from these requirements necessitates obtaining approval from the Graduate Advisor of Record.

Entry into Generalist and Specialized Field Practicum

As part of the field application process, each student (generalist and specialized) must submit the following to the Office of Field Education in order to be considered for entry into field education:

1. Field Practicum Application
2. Field Readiness Verification Form
3. Résumé
4. Documentation of Student Professional Liability Insurance (Limits of Liability at \$1,000,000/\$5,000,000)
5. Student must be in good academic standing
 - a. Cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale
 - b. Free of incomplete grades
6. If a student continues to be on conditional admission status (less than 3.0), the MSW Program Advisor must recommend him/her to enter field practicum. "Field Readiness Review" by faculty and Field Office
 - a. Each semester, the Field Director and Coordinator present a list of the students who have applied for field entry to the faculty. Each student is reviewed by faculty who collectively recommend entry into field, making recommendations that they believe will support the student's success. Students who are identified as having potential challenges are asked to meet with the Field Director, Field Coordinator, or with their faculty advisor to establish criteria for student success in field, as needed.
7. *Applying for Field Session.* Prior to beginning Field Practicum I and Field Practicum III students must complete this session. This online training is

mandatory and includes, but is not limited to, an introduction of field administrators, faculty, and staff; field placement process (application with supplementary materials, deadlines, and interview process and final assignment). Students are also required to submit the “Terms of Agreement” as part of this training in order to be eligible for field.

8. *Starting Field Session.* Prior to beginning Field Practicum I and Field Practicum III, all students are required to attend a starting field session. This session includes, but is not limited to, discussion of the structure of field education, field policies and procedures, *All-In-One* (educational agreement and final evaluation), Integrative Seminar, grading procedures, and liaison system. Students who completed generalist field at UTSA complete an abbreviated presentation of field requirements and policies.
9. *Prerequisites.* Prior to beginning Field Practicum I, students must successfully complete all prerequisite courses, including SWK 5013, SWK 5103, and SWK 5113. In addition, SWK 5513 must be taken either prior to or concurrent with Field I.

Students who do not meet the criteria specified above or are deemed by faculty and/or field administrators to not be “field ready” either delay field until they meet criteria, or, in some instances, go through a level review process to determine what additional conditions must be met prior to field entry.

Starting Field and Incompletes

Students may not begin field with an Incomplete in any class

- Students must verify that they do not have any outstanding incompletes by signing the “Field Readiness Verification Form” during the Starting Field training prior to placement.
- If a student is scheduled to begin field and then receives or has an incomplete as of the 1st official day of field, the student may not begin to log field hours without verification that the incomplete has been resolved (letter/email from the professor or transcript showing the change of grade).
- If a student still has an incomplete in a non-field class two weeks past the official start date of Field I or Field III, the student will need to drop field for the semester, will be considered ineligible for field, and will be required to reapply for field for the next available semester.

Entry into Field Practicum II is contingent upon successful completion of Field Practicum I. Entry into Field Practicum III, the Specialized Field Practicum, is contingent upon successful

completion of Field Practicum I and Field Practicum II as well as other generalist coursework or entry as an advanced standing student. Entry into Field Practicum IV is contingent upon successful completion of Field Practicum III, unless Specialized Field is completed in Block format.

- Enrollment in Field Practicum I also requires concurrent enrollment in Social Work Methods: Foundations of Practice I
- Enrollment in Field Practicum II also requires concurrent enrollment in Social Work Methods: Foundations of Practice II
- Enrollment in Field Practicum III also requires concurrent enrollment in Specialized Social Work Methods: Individual Practice
- Enrollment in Specialized Block Practicum (Combined Field Practicum III & IV) requires concurrent enrollment in Specialized Social Work Methods: Individual Practice.

Additional Factors for Generalist and Specialized Field Practicum Assignments

Some of the factors that may be considered in the placement of students include the following:

- Required generalist field practicum courses (SWK 5403 Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar and SWK 5413 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar) must be taken in consecutive semesters and must be taken prior to enrollment in specialized courses (for non- BSW students only). The generalist field is one assignment in two consecutive semesters for a minimum of 450 clock hours.
- The specialized field practicum (SWK 5423 and 5443) assignment is at one practicum site in two consecutive semesters or one semester in a block format for a minimum of 450 clock hours.
- Office of Field Education authorizes the lifting of departmental holds after all field materials have been submitted, thus enabling students to register for classes once the Social Work Office has removed the hold.
- Due to the demands of potential field instructors and the requirements of field education, students are not allowed to contact or visit field instructor/agencies for the purpose of creating a field placement.
- Specific hours required by the agency. Typically, social service organizations offer field practicum during the Monday – Friday work week. The hours are 8 AM to 5 PM.
- Student's availability for field practicum. As noted above, it is expected the student will have hours during the day to complete the field practicum requirement of the curriculum.
- Options for evening and weekend placements are limited; therefore, students

are advised to have flexibility regarding availability of time to complete field practicum hours. There is no guarantee of a field placement offering during evening/weekend hours.

- Language ability.
- The number of field instructors available in a particular setting.
- Practicum site and field instructor meet the policies, criteria, and procedures established by the Office of Field Education and are willing to participate in practicum instruction and training in a given semester.
- University of Texas System Educational and Program Affiliation Agreements must be completed and approved by all parties before a student's practicum assignment is finalized.
- Special needs that require accommodation.
 - The Office of Field Education will work closely with the student and the UTSA Disability Services (DS) to ensure equal access. Eligible students should contact DS before the beginning of the semester to discuss their needs and make appropriate arrangements. A disability verification letter and an interview with the Director of DS will begin the process for obtaining services. At the downtown campus, DS is located in Room 1.302 Buena Vista Building (BV). The hours are 8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. (Monday- Thursday); 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. (Friday). The telephone numbers are: (210) 458-2945 Voice/TTY. The student will bring the disability verification letter to the Office of Field Education.
- Conflict of Interest. No social work student may be placed in an agency wherein she/he was, or is, a client or an immediate family member was, or is, a client or an employee. Students who are found attempting to secure or who secure a placement in an agency where they, or a member of their family, are or were a client may have their entry into field practicum delayed. Additionally, the field instructor must not be a family member, friend, spouse, partner, ex-spouse/partner, etc. Since the Social Work Department does not ascertain client or employee information from agencies or students, it is the responsibility of the student to decline (or not select) a placement based on conflict of interest.
- Background checks. Some field practicum sites may require background checks of social work students prior to placement and may require the student to obtain this report her/himself. The outcome of this action may result in a student being accepted or denied by the field practicum setting. Students may be responsible for covering the cost of the background check, depending on the agency.

- Prior felony convictions. The department expects students with prior felony convictions to inform the Field Director or Coordinator of such convictions prior to assignment. Given the laws governing work with children and other vulnerable populations, persons with felony convictions are not allowed to work or be placed in certain agencies or situations. A prior felony conviction will limit or result in no practicum site availability. Additionally, a prior felony conviction may affect one's application for social work licensing. It is the responsibility of the student to contact the Texas Department of State Health Services Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners to determine applicability of social work licensing. The web site is <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/default.shtm>
- Physical and emotional wellness. It is imperative that students have good physical and emotional wellness prior to entry into field. The obligations of field, additional course work, employment, family, etc., may impact the student's performance; therefore the student would be prudent to notify the Office of Field Education of such issues prior to placement. A practicum site may require psychological testing prior to approval. If you prefer not to participate in such testing, please advise the Field Office.
- A field practicum site may require preventive health measures such as a physical examination, immunizations, or drug tests. Some sites may also require the student to carry health insurance. Students have a right to decline these tests or obligations, but they must discuss this issue with the Office of Field Education.
- Stipends are offered on a very limited basis. Upon learning of a stipend opportunity, the Field Office will notify eligible students about the opportunity and the application process. The field instructor has the final say as to the candidate who will be awarded the stipend. In giving a stipend, the agency may require more than 450 clock hours.

Generalist Field Practicum

The generalist field practicum, completed concurrently over two semesters with social work methods courses, affords the student the opportunity for experiential learning of generalist practice skills and application of generalist coursework completed previously. Prior to beginning generalist field, students must have completed generalist courses in policy, human behavior, and generalist practice, and either take cultural competence prior to or concurrently while in generalist field.

Each field practicum also has a corresponding integrative seminar and a concurrent methods course. The integrative seminar serves as the mechanism to link field practicum with competencies and component behaviors that support the Program vision, mission, goals, and

values. The seminar is an added assurance that the classroom content and experience in the practicum setting are strongly linked. This seminar is designed to provide a forum so that students may openly discuss field issues, integrate course assignments with field practicum experiences, process experiences “in the field,” provide an orientation to various agency services and functions, provide students with a structure in which they can support and learn from one another, relate conceptual learning to practice, and increase the knowledge of other agencies’ functions, services, policies, and issues.

The Program’s core competencies and 31 generalist practice behaviors are used to measure the student’s competency in the field setting, the integrative seminars, and the methods courses. These 31 practice behaviors are divided between the two field practicum semesters for emphasis, although all practice behaviors are assessed at the end of Field Practicum II.

Specialized Field Practicum

The specialized field practicum is designed to provide students with a practicum experience that builds on the generalist experience and incorporates content from specialized coursework taken prior to entry into advanced field. Students come to specialized field with an understanding of the Program’s integrative framework that incorporates cultural competence, social construction, a multidimensional contextual perspective, and transformational social work. The Field Practicum III Integrative Seminar is designed to integrate classroom theory and real world practice as the student begins to make the transition from student to specialized practitioner. It also serves as the bridge between Program goals and the application of specialized component behaviors in the field setting. Field Practicum III must be taken concurrently with Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals. This allows for integration of course content and assignments that incorporate the field experience.

The Integrative Seminar for Field IV focuses on preparing the student for the transition to becoming a culturally competent transformative social work practitioner, with an emphasis on critical reflection and life-long learning. Students demonstrate Program competency mastery through completion of an independent capstone course paper. For this competency assignment, students use a complex case from their field practicum to demonstrate mastery of specialized competencies and component behaviors, incorporating the knowledge, skills, values, program theoretical/conceptual frameworks and themes and demonstrating critical thinking and reflection. They draw from an educational portfolio of all assignments completed in specialized coursework to complete this assignment.

Placement Procedure for Generalist and Specialized Field Practicum

Generalist and Specialized Field Practicum are designed to reflect the Social Work Program’s emphasis on culturally competent social work practice. The Office of Field Education gives the final approval for assignments. The philosophy supporting the placement process is to develop an experience that will build upon and enhance existing strengths, as it prepares the student for future practice. The Field Office assigns generalist students to a generalist practice placement.

At the specialized level, the student will be invited to meet with one of the Field Office Staff to discuss field options as related to career goals and interests. The Field staff and the specialized student jointly agree on a practicum site.

The assignment of a practicum site for Generalist and Specialized Field Practicum is determined in the following manner:

- The Field Office will review the student's field practicum application packet. An individual session may be requested of the student from the Field Office to further explore the student's options.
 - Student responses to specific items on the application are reviewed and taken into consideration for a student assignment.
- If necessary, the student file is reviewed by the Field Office.
- Affiliated practicum sites are reviewed for the upcoming semester. Assignments will be made only to agencies that are formally affiliated with the University of Texas System.
- The agency and student will be advised of the respective contact information. The field instructor will be e-mailed the student's name and résumé. Students are e-mailed information from the Office of Field Education and are expected to set up an appointment with the agency within 48 hours.
 - The generalist student arranges an introductory session with the field instructor. It is expected this referral will be the practicum assignment.
 - The specialized student arranges an interview with the field instructor.
- After these sessions, the student and the field instructor each notify the Office of Field Education of acceptance or concerns about this session.
 - At the specialized level, the Field Office may continue to broker the assignment until the student and field instructor make a mutual decision of acceptance.
 - The match is made and the practicum site and the student are officially informed of the practicum assignment by e-mail. All assignment information will be posted on IPT for both the student and the field instructor. All due dates are also posted on IPT. The liaison assignment is made in consultation between Department Chair and Director of Field Education.

In the event that a student is referred for an interview with an agency and the agency declines to accept the student, a referral will be made to another agency. If three different agencies decline to accept a student, the student will go through a faculty level review process to determine field

readiness and next steps.

Employment Based Practicums

Some students request their field placements in their work setting or place of employment so that they can be paid for all or part of their practicum. The Social Work Program at UTSA makes available two options for Employment Based Practicums:

Option 1 is “**Workplace Setting**” practicum at the employment site, but not the student’s paid employment position with different duties.

Option 2 is “**On-the-Job**” practicum where a student, employed within a social service agency, can count some of their work hours as practicum hours. For maximum educational growth, it is important that students be exposed to a range of diversity of practice experience to support their professional development.

The UTSA Social Work program recognizes that the activities of one’s ongoing employment and learning are parallel, but there is an important difference between the goals of social work education and the delivery of service as a paid employee.

Requests for Employment Based Practicums will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Field Education. The agency and student must create and support an educationally based field learning experience. Students will indicate their desire for an Employment Based Practicum opportunity by discussing this with the UTSA Social Work Field Office. Once approved to explore this option, students and their employer must demonstrate how the supervision requirements and required CSWE competencies will be met. This will be documented and signed by the student, agency supervisor/field instructor, and the Director of Field Education.

Policy: Council on Social Work Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation states:

3.3.7 The program has a policy documenting whether it permits field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. If permitted, **student assignments and employee tasks may qualify as field hours when directly linked to the nine social work competencies** (and any additional competencies added by the program) and level of practice (generalist or specialized). **Field education supervision may be provided by the same supervisor if field education supervision is distinct from employment supervision, and the supervisor meets the requirements of Accreditation Standard 3.3.6.** The policy documents how the program assists students with field education continuation or change in situations where a student becomes unemployed in an organization where field education has co-occurred with employment.

- a. The program provides its policy related to field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. If permitted, the program’s policy includes:

- i. How the program ensures that student assignments are directly linked to the nine social work competencies (and any additional competencies added by the program) and level of practice (generalist or specialized);
 - ii. How field education supervision is distinct from employment supervision time, even when provided by the same supervisor; and
 - iii. How the program assists students with field education continuation or change in situations where a student becomes unemployed in an organization where field education has co-occurred with employment.
- b. The program describes how these policies are articulated to students and field personnel.
 - c. The program addresses all program options

Policy: UT San Antonio Department of Social Work

There are two options of the UT San Antonio Department of Social Work's Employment Based Practicum which will be discussed in detail below.

The following policy is designed to help students and agencies that wish to request an Employment Based Practicum. Requirements must be addressed and documented in adherence to CSWE accreditation standards. These have been developed to ensure accomplishment of the social work education goals and objectives while the student is placed in his/her employment setting.

Therefore, the following policy will apply to those students requesting an Employment Based Practicum of either option:

- The student has permanent status with the employer and must be in good standing. The student must be past their probationary period.
- During the field practicum courses, the student must continue to perform at a satisfactory level in both employment and the field practicum setting;
- The organization meets the eligibility criteria for field practicum setting and has an Affiliation Agreement on file or is willing to complete the paperwork to qualify as a field practicum setting.; The educational opportunities in place of employment must permit achievement of the 9 social work competencies and skills compatible with the student's social work practice classes.
- It is optimal that the agency has a qualified field instructor who is preferably not the supervisor for regular employment and who will meet the responsibilities of a field instructor. However, CSWE has agreed that the employment supervisor and field instructor can now be the same person. Field Instructor requirements: for the BSW program, must have a BSW or MSW from accredited university with 2+ years of experience post-graduation; for the MSW program, the field instructor must have an MSW from an accredited university with 2+ years of experience post-graduation.

Employment supervision and practicum supervision must be separate and signified in the Employment Based Practicum proposal. Names of immediate supervisor and field instructor must also be included in the proposal. If the agency does not have a qualified social work field instructor on staff, they must arrange for an approved off-site field instructor to provide the required supervision and designate an on-site task supervisor to provide daily oversight and support.

- The employment supervisor and field supervisor must agree that the practicum evaluation will not impact the student's employment evaluation. The student must complete the Employment Based Practicum Application and get approval signatures by posted semester dates on ipt.
- The field practicum must have a clearly identifiable educational focus unencumbered by workload and the administrative requirements of regular employment (For example, this may mean a lighter caseload, involvement in community-based assignments not typically assigned by the organization yet overseen by the field instructor, and additional hours beyond the normal work week.);
- The employment hours and practicum hours must be clearly differentiated and specified in the proposal.
 - The student will articulate the clock hours for work and field practicum.
 - If the student is meeting the field practicum clock hour requirement after employment hours, that must be clearly stated;
 - If the employer allows overlap in hours, this must also be articulated. Clear educational focus unencumbered by workload and administrative requirements of regular employment;
- A student can only complete one placement at their place of employment. (ie. Only one practicum...BSW, Generalist, or Specialized). The second placement must be outside the place of employment with another Field Instructor. Exceptions to this policy may be considered by the Director of Field Education on a case-by-case basis when it can be demonstrated that the proposed practicum can provide a unique educational experience in a new program, or with a new focus, and with a new field instructor.
- It is the responsibility of the Field Office to determine that the field practicum at the place of employment is consistent with the Department of Social Work curriculum and CSWE Accreditation Standards.
- The liaison, as part of her/his duties, will ensure the Employment Based Practicum experience is being adhered to as outlined.
- The student will take the initiative of coordinating a meeting with the immediate supervisor, potential field instructor, and representative from the Field Office. The student will also be present at this meeting;

- It is the responsibility of the student to submit an Employment Based Practicum application to the Office of Field Education, which addresses the above policy within the published deadlines. This proposal must include written documentation from the agency that explicitly addresses all the points above and must be submitted within the published deadlines. The Field Office has experienced the most successful Employment Based practicum assignments are accomplished when a Field Office representative visits the agency. The application must be signed by the student, work supervisor, prospective field instructor and agency executive. All deadlines are published on IPT.
- The completed application is submitted to the Office of Field Education within the published due dates. The Director or Coordinator of Field Education reviews the application and will notify the student whether the placement is acceptable or acceptable with adjustment. Approval of the application is documented in writing and distributed to all parties. The Employment Based Agreement may not be altered or amended unless agreed to by all persons (students, employer, and field office). Accordingly, if an agency alters the term of placement without informing the field office, the placement will be suspended and will not resume until a revised agreement can be arranged in a timely manner. This revised agreement must be written and signed by the Executive Director of the agency (of their designee), the student/employee, the faculty liaison, and filed with the Field Office.

Besides particular requirements of either Employment Based Practicums, these placements follow all the UTSA Field requirements in this manual.

Overview of the 2 Options for Employment Based Practicums

Option 1: Workplace Setting (pre-existing)	Option 2: On the Job Practicum (new)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be part-time or full-time employee in good standing with the agency and university. • Follow standard UTSA Field hour requirements • Practicum duties must be different than employment duties and in another area of the agency. • Field Instructor must be an MSW with 2+ years' experience post MSW. It's optimal if this person is different than the student's employment supervisor but can be the same person at the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student must be <u>a</u> part-time or full-time employee with a social service agency and be in good standing with the University and the agency. • Can only count 16 hours/week (Fall & Spring) and 24 hours/week (Summer) toward practicum hours • Capstone project over two semesters • Field Instructor must be MSW with 2+ years' experience post MSW • • Field Instructor and employment supervisor can be the same person, but

discretion of the Field Director. •	supervisions (employment & practicum) must be separate.
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Capstone project for On-the-Job Practicum

- One of the most valuable experiences included within an MSW sequence is the social work capstone project. The capstone project is a multi-faceted integrative assignment that is designed to provide students with the opportunity to apply their previous learning in the field and in the classroom through the implementation of a project. The Capstone Project also gives students the opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession and to develop and enhance professional presentation skills through the creation and delivery of the project.
- The student agrees to complete a Capstone Project over the two semesters:
 - *Student is expected to create a learning plan that contains at least one project that spans two semesters, that relates to all of the nine competencies, reflects attainment of social work values and ethics, and demonstrates substantial professional growth and development.*
 - *In combining research with field work, social work programs prepare graduates to transition from classroom to the workplace.*
 - *Topic areas could include (for example) racial equity, anti-racism within social work practice, service-learning project, or trauma informed practices within the agency, etc.*
 - ☐ *Analysis a social justice or human rights issue relevant to the field experience*
 - ☐ *Analyze current human rights or social justice issues such as multicultural family systems*
 - ☐ *Health and wellness, public policy, and/or sustainable development*
 - ☐ *Offer potential solutions to problems their employers face*
 - ☐ *20–30-page essay identifying an issue or need at their site. Research the topic and suggest solutions.*
- *Students will upload an update on their project at the end of^{the 1st} semester liaison meeting and final evaluation. Reflection is acceptable. Students will also be required to write a reflection about how the project has allowed them to integrate course content with field. The Field Team (Director or Coordinator) and Field Instructor will evaluate and comment on the student's project at the mid and final placement visits. It is up to this team if the student should be required to*

present their capstone. The student will take the initiative of coordinating a meeting with the immediate supervisor, potential field instructor, and representative from the Field Office. The student will also be present at this meeting;

- The proposal must be signed by student, work supervisor, prospective field instructor and agency executive;
- The completed proposal is submitted to the Office of Field Education with the Field Application within the published deadlines; and
- The Director or Coordinator of Field Education reviews the proposal and will notify the student whether the placement is acceptable or acceptable with adjustment.
 - Approval of the proposal is documented in writing and will be distributed to all respective parties.
- All deadlines are published on IPT.

Long Distance and International Field Placements

UTSA recognizes the importance of flexibility for students seeking internships in areas of expertise or geographic location. For that reason, the Field Office works closely with students who are seeking long distance practicum assignments. The Office of Field Education has primarily supported placements in sites within Texas within a 200 mile radius, however, at times it is possible for students to complete out-of-state and international field placements. Because a student expressed interest in an international placement, a Department International Committee was established to develop guidelines for international placements. Long distance and international placements are only available to specialized students, and there is no guarantee that sites are available; however, students are encouraged to discuss interests in these placements with their faculty advisors as soon as possible so options can be explored if realistic.

The following policies and procedures have been developed for UTSA MSW students interested in applying for an international field placement. As with all field placements, international field placements are coordinated by the UTSA Field Office. An interested student contacts the Field Office regarding the criteria and application process. Certain criteria must be met for the student to be eligible for an international field placement:

- The student must be in good academic standing with the University and have a 3.5 or above GPA. This good standing must be present throughout the field practicum assignment.
- The student cannot have any outstanding “incompletes” in courses.
- The student must be applying for the specialized field placement.
- If an advanced standing student, the student must have completed at least

two semesters in the UTSA MSW program.

- The International Committee and Field Office review the student's field placement evaluation for suitability, the undergraduate field evaluation for advanced standing students., and the generalist field evaluation for 60 hour students.
- The student must have the written recommendation of at least one faculty member, including his/her advisor.
- The student must be available for a block placement.
- The student must submit an application and written essay by an established deadline.
- The student must register with the UTSA International Office and attend all required trainings and deadlines of that office.
- The student must attend all Field Office trainings pertaining to field.
- The student cannot have any felony or misdemeanor convictions.

Application Process

Due to the logistical needs of international placements, the application process begins at least two to three semesters before the specialized field practicum semester is to begin. The student submits an International Field Application to the Field Office along with an essay of no more than two pages that addresses the following: interest in an international field placement, country interested in and why, population interested in working with and why, career goals and how this experience will influence those goals.

Fees

An administrative fee of \$800 has been proposed and is expected to be assessed for each international field placement. This fee will cover costs for faculty travel to the field site if necessary or other miscellaneous costs that may be associated with the placement, including technology support and software. Housing, transportation, immunizations, passport and costs for other expenses are the responsibility of the student. The UTSA Office of International Programs has an application requirement which includes additional fees. Students are also eligible to apply for funding from the Office of International Programs to support their practicum; students to date have received several thousand dollars each.

- The Field Office screens applicants for eligibility and forwards names of eligible applicants to the International Committee. The International Committee notifies students of preliminary eligibility.
- The student meets with the Field Office to discuss country of interest, availability of country and agencies, and goodness of fit with the student's

interests and learning needs.

- Only selected countries are used by the UTSA Department of Social Work at this time.
- During the interview process, factors considered include the student's flexibility and adaptability, previous internship experiences and outcomes, motivation for placement and career goals, academic record, financial barriers, and travel experience of the student.
- The field practicum must occur in an agency with a qualified field instructor who is available for weekly supervision as well as day-to-day supervision as needed.
- The proposed field agency or proposed University must have an Affiliation Agreement and Program Agreement on file with UTSA or be willing to complete the necessary paperwork. All affiliation paperwork must be completed prior to the placement beginning.
- The Field Instructor must be willing to participate in Field Instructor training via SKYPE, teleconference, or internet. The Field Instructor must submit a Field Instructor profile prior to the field placement beginning and must meet the qualifications (or equivalent) of the MSW degree.

Related Courses

The student is expected to participate in Integrative Seminars III and IV via SKYPE if it is available. If not available, other arrangements are made with the Field Office. The student is expected to either complete the specialized individuals course the semester prior to the block field placement or the semester of the block field placement via distance learning. All other specialized coursework must be completed prior to the block field placement.

The student must notify the Field Office of interest in an international placement by the following dates:

- By September 1 for summer field
- By February 1 for all fall field

The student must submit a completed International Field Application by the following dates:

- By December 1 for summer field
- By May 1 for fall field

The dates listed above are subject to change. It is highly advised that interested students contact the UTSA Field Office at (210) 458 3007 or SWField@utsa.edu for further information.

Change of Field Placement

The Office of Field Education considers the placement of students as a serious process between

the Director or Coordinator of Field Education, student, field instructor, and practicum site. Assignment of students to a field practicum site are made for the duration of the generalist or specialized assignment.

Conflict resolution and professional negotiation are essential skills for Masters-level social workers. MSW interns are expected to take responsibility for their own learning and for initiating problem-solving when issues arise at a practicum site. At times, however, circumstances may require that a student be changed to another agency. This is a serious step and is taken only after careful consideration and communication with everyone involved. Such changes may be made at the request of the field instructor, liaison, the student, or the Department of Social Work, and may occur at any point in the year depending on the reason for the disruption. A change in field placement may be granted for any of the following reasons:

- Change in personal circumstances (academic, finances, family, transportation, health, life circumstance);
- Field practicum site is not able to provide accessibility to students with differential abilities;
- Change in Department of Social Work policy;
- Internal matters of the agency;
- Field instructor resigns from the agency;
- Student's concern that her/his educational needs are not being met;
- Liaison recommendation;
 - Concern about student's performance (such as ethical violations, academic performance, inappropriate dress/behavior, and/or repeated tardiness or absences);
 - The proposal to do the field practicum at work setting is not being followed; and
 - A mismatch has occurred between the student and the practicum setting or field instructor that was not apparent during the placement process.

Procedure for Change of Field Placement

The request to change field practicum assignment may be initiated by the student, field instructor, and/or the liaison.

- The student and field instructor must first discuss the desire for change of field placement. A careful delineation of the factors involved is required.
- If the issues are not resolved, the student and field instructor must discuss the concerns with the liaison.

- The liaison will advise the Office of Field Education of the situation and continue to assess the situation, mediate, and attempt to find a resolution. Once resolved, the liaison will advise the Director accordingly.
- If no resolution is found, the liaison will make a formal recommendation to the Office of Field Education.
- After consultation with the liaison, the Director of Field Education will make a decision regarding the requested change. The Director of Field Education has the option of requesting a meeting of all parties involved.
- A consensus of those involved will be required in order to proceed with the change of field placement and/or field instructor. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, she/he is free to pursue the grievance policy and procedures of the Department of Social Work that is in the *UTSA Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual*.
- If a change of placement is necessary, the *Change of Field Placement Request Form* must be signed by the student and liaison.
- Upon receipt of the form, the Director of Field Education will contact the student's liaison, faculty member teaching the respective integrative seminar, and field instructor to advise them of the process to be undertaken. If appropriate, the field instructor and student will complete an abbreviated evaluation which will be approved by the faculty liaison.
- If it is deemed the student should continue in field, the Field Coordinator will work with the student in determining another practicum site.

Depending on the circumstances for the change in field practicum site, a student may be immediately placed in a new agency, or the student may be required to delay her/his practicum until a practicum site is available that meets his/her educational needs. In situations where the practicum is delayed, the Director or Coordinator of Field Education will advise the Department Chair, faculty member teaching the Integrative Seminar, and MSW program advisor. A joint meeting with the student and any other appropriate individuals may be called to develop a plan for the student's progress in the program.

Removal of Student from Field Practicum Setting

A social work student may be removed from the field practicum setting by the field instructor and/or the liaison for documented unprofessional conduct or for demonstrable lack of progress in achieving field education objectives. A student may also be removed if it is recommended by the

liaison and approved by the Director of Field Education and Department Chair if the setting is no longer educationally sound. If a student is removed from field for unprofessional conduct or lack of educational progress, a formal Level III Review will be held to determine the next steps.

There are two types of dismissal from the UTSA College for Health, Community and Policy and the Department of Social Work: academic and non-academic. The *UTSA Information Bulletin* has specific policies related to this issue, including the Student Code of Conduct, University policies, academic honesty and scholastic dishonesty. This document is available on-line at <http://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/>.

Additionally, the Department of Social Work has established policies regarding Social Work Student Standards that are based on the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>), Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners Code of Ethics (<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/>), and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice (<http://www.naswdc.org/sections/credentials/culturalcomp.asp>).

The *Student Standards* policies and procedures also include due process for the student. (The Student Standards may be found in the Appendix of this *Student Handbook and Field Manual*)

Selection of Field Agencies and Field Instructors

Criteria for Selection of Field Agencies

Field Education is a collaborative endeavor between the Department of Social Work and social service related agencies in the education of MSW students for social work practice.

Therefore, any human service organization is eligible for consideration to affiliate with the UTSA Department of Social Work to provide field instruction to students. The Department takes initiative in determining possible field placement sites given the concentration in cultural competence, student interests, and Program needs. The Department Field Committee also provides input regarding development of new placement sites, with careful attention to their fit with the Program's mission and emphasis on cultural competence.

If an agency is interested in becoming a field site, there is an affiliation process the agency must go through that includes the development of a formal affiliation agreement between the agency and UTSA. During the affiliation approval process, special consideration is given to those settings that most closely support the Social Work Program's cultural competence concentration and program policies, vision, mission, values, goals, competencies, and practice behaviors.

In order for agencies to be approved with the UTSA Department of Social Work for the purpose of providing field instruction, field education practicum sites must complete a facility information sheet, agency profile, and field instructor profile as well as meet the following criteria:

- have an administration and staff that demonstrate a respect for the UTSA MSW Program's philosophy, policies, vision, mission, values, goals, competencies, and practice behaviors in efforts to provide a positive learning experience for

the student;

- be committed, able, and willing to incorporate the Department's emphasis on culturally competent social work in the practicum setting;
- maintain a social welfare service as a recognized function of the agency/organization or have a planning function relevant to providing services that will contribute culturally competent social work practice;
- be clear about their programs and service delivery methods;
- have a volume and flow of agency programs that will offer students a wide range of learning opportunities, including working within and outside systems of different sizes and diverse populations;
- have qualified field instructors;
- provide release time for field instructors to carry out Social Work Departmental responsibilities, including weekly supervision with student(s), and participation in field related orientation, training, and meetings;
- have a staff that is large enough to ensure that the basic agency program is developed and maintained sufficiently without reliance on students;
- make available suitable desk space, telephones, basic office equipment (includes supplies), agency-related transportation/travel reimbursement, clerical support, and access to confidential interviewing facilities;
- agree to the execution of an Educational Experience and Program Affiliation Agreement with The University of Texas System;
- provide necessary measures to protect students' safety;
- support The University of Texas at San Antonio and Department of Social Work policies on nondiscrimination and human diversity, to include but not limited to: Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action and Persons with Disabilities;
- support the student's obligations to UTSA and the Department of Social Work for completion of assignments and attendance in Integrative Seminars and other courses;
- have a commitment to continuous quality improvement, such as having a representative board of directors, fiscal accountability via annual audit, commitment to strategic planning, and be subject to periodic review by an accrediting agency or funding entity; and
- communicate changes in field instructors to the Office of Field Education as

soon as possible in order to make the necessary arrangements for student supervision.

In the case of significant concerns about a field practicum site once it has been selected, problem solving will be used to help the setting meet required standards. If this is not successful, the Director of Field Education will bring the issue to the Department Chair for consultation for one of two actions: (1) to decline to use the practicum site or field instructor; or (2) continue to use the site or field instructor with plans for strengthening the site.

Criteria for the Selection of Field Instructors

The significant and central role played by field instructors in the educational experience of the student requires that they are carefully screened, selected, trained, and evaluated. In order to be approved by the Department of Social Work as a field instructor, she/he must meet the criteria below. Upon receipt of an application, the Director or Coordinator of Field may make an initial site visit to determine whether the organization and field instructors meet the criteria for selection. At this initial site visit, the Field Office will approve the field instructor.

The following criteria are for Field Instructors at the graduate level. Field instructors must:

- possess a Master of Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited social work program and a demonstrated competence in practice;
- have at least two years of social work experience following the Master of Social Work degree;
- be employed or associated with the agency for a minimum of one year (full-time equivalent);
- have the full support of the agency's executive officer and the administration to actively participate in the social work field instructor educational obligations, such as supervision, trainings, and other field processes;
- have ability in and knowledge of areas of social work practice being taught by the Department of Social Work;
- have thorough knowledge of the agency in which they are employed or volunteer;
- attend a training seminar in field instruction provided by the Department of Social Work;
- complete continuing training obligations required by the Department of Social Work;
- make use of support systems designed for field instruction;
- comply with the requirement to work closely with the Department of Social Work in coordinating course assignments and provide timely feedback to the Department through the liaison on the progress of the individual student;
- participate in the ongoing mutual exchange of ideas with the Department of Social Work; and

- demonstrate interest in teaching, supervision, staff development, and continuous quality improvement.
- agree to provide individual weekly supervision. Field instructors working with multiple students must provide individual supervision a minimum of every other week, with group supervision as an option during the in-between weeks.
- Due to the possible conflict of interest and to provide more avenues of support for the practicum student, full-time Faculty/Staff may not serve as Field Instructors. In rare instances, the Field Director or Field Coordinator (full-time Field Staff), may assume the role of Field Instructor. This would apply only when a student is already placed with an agency and the agency Field Instructor is no longer able to provide supervision and no other field instructor is available.

Procedure for Supervision of Student Interns when the MSW Supervisor Leaves the Agency

In the event that a field instructor providing supervision to an MSW student intern leaves the agency or becomes unavailable to continue providing field instruction, the following procedure will be taken:

1. The student will be placed with another MSW within the organization. When possible, the field instructor is expected to facilitate the process of seeking out and transferring the student to another MSW within the organization.
2. When there is not another MSW available within the organization willing or able to provide supervision, the following options will be considered by the Field Office, with decisions made on a case-by-case basis:
 - a. The student may have the option of following the field instructor to a new agency;
 - b. The student may have the option of staying at the agency and receiving instruction from an external field instructor who meets the requirements to be a UTSA field instructor, including but not limited to agency board members, an MSW from a partner organization, or a Field Office staff or faculty member, if necessary.
 - c. The Field Office may move the student to a new agency with a new field instructor.

Continuing Dialogue with Agencies

Contacts are maintained with field education settings in three ways: field liaisons, integrative seminars, and field instructor training/contact with field instructors by the Field Office. The field liaison supports and enhances continuing dialog with agencies, serving as a link between the agency and the Department. Each student is assigned a liaison from the Department of Social Work.

Liaison System Goals and Objectives

The goal of the liaison system is to ensure a cohesive and progressive training experience in the field practicum. Specific objectives include:

- To provide a mechanism by which the department can meet its primary responsibility for the student's educational progress; and
- To provide a structure that maintains the educational integrity of the department/practicum site/student collaboration through consistent communication and feedback.

Liaison Roles and Responsibilities

The liaison contributes to the development of the student's educational agreement, focuses on monitoring the student's educational progress and performance, and consistently maintains a positive working relationship between the Department and the practicum site. The relationship between the liaison and the practicum site is expected to extend over the period of the practicum assignments.

Responsibilities of the liaison include:

- Assuring the field practicum setting and field instructor have the ability or potential to provide educational opportunities congruent with the Department of Social Work curriculum that allow students to demonstrate mastery of competencies and component behaviors;
- Maintaining a continuing relationship with the practicum setting, the field instructor(s), and the student(s) in the site during the placement period;
- Serving as the first point of contact for the field instructor and student;
- Consulting with the Director of Field Education regarding issues that may need attention;
- Participating in the development of field practicum sites through
 - generation of ideas regarding practice tasks for respective competencies and component behaviors;
 - offering constructive feedback to the field instructor regarding teaching and supervision;
- Reviewing the Educational Agreement to assure component behaviors are parallel to selected program objectives and practice indicators;
 - Providing consultation regarding linking classroom theory and/or assignments to field practicum experience;
- Assuming primary responsibility for meeting with the designated field

instructor and student during the semester to review student progress and providing on-going evaluation,

- At the beginning of the first semester, the liaison will meet with the student and the field instructor on site by the fourth week of the semester to review the Educational Agreement portion of the *All-In-One*;
- At the end of the first semester, the liaison will meet with the student and field instructor on site for an evaluation and preparation of the Educational Agreement for the second semester;
- At mid-point of the second semester, the liaison will contact the field instructor and student;
- At the end of the second semester, the liaison will make a site visit to review the final evaluation;
- Communicating the Department's curriculum and policies to the field instructor and student;
- Conferring with the Director of Field Education in relation to initiating, continuing, or terminating the field placement with which she/he consults;
- Assuming responsibility for recommending the student's final grade--
 - Grade is based on the student's performance in the field and mastery of selected practice behaviors. The student must perform at a "B" level (84) or better to receive a passing grade for the course.
 - Reflects the assessment and recommendation of the field instructor
 - In instances where the student's performance is deemed less than satisfactory by the Field Instructor, the Liaison consults with the field instructor and student regarding a satisfactory resolution of the relevant issues and advises the Director of Field Education of the situation and outcome.
- Addressing issues that are related to the educational and professional progress of student, and participating in the resolution of conflict between field instructor and student(s);
- Participating in the continuous quality improvement by assessing field practicum sites and field instructors.

Evaluation of Student Performance and Grading

Student evaluation in the field practicum setting for all field courses is on a continual basis during weekly supervision between the student and the field instructor. The liaison joins this evaluation process during the visits throughout the practicum semester(s). This model of evaluation prevents “surprises” at the final evaluation since progress should be an ongoing mutual exercise. This evaluation process is formalized as a written evaluation at the end of each semester that includes a recommended grade from the liaison and a final grade from the faculty member teaching the respective integrative seminar.

The *All-In-One* is an instrument that combines the Educational Agreements and Final Evaluations for all 450 clock hours. The *Field Education Guide* gives a step-by-step process for completion of this document as well as providing examples of generalist and specialized tasks/assignments/work plan. It is organized by specialized and generalist levels with competencies and component behaviors. The competencies and generalist component behaviors were suggested by CSWE and adopted by UTSA social work faculty; the specialized component behaviors were created by faculty.

The evaluation criteria are based on the educational agreement, student evaluation, and assignments within the integrative seminar. The *All-In-One* is available on IPT to students, field instructors, and liaisons so that they may be aware of the criteria used before the actual completion of the instrument. All evaluation forms outline the purpose of the evaluation, student evaluation rating scales, the recommendation of grade, and the processes to be followed.

The process of completing student performance evaluations should be a joint one between the student and field instructor. Students are encouraged to complete their own self-evaluation and discuss it in supervision as a means of actively participating in the evaluation process. The evaluation process is an opportunity to:

- explore and determine where the student is now and where she/he needs to go within a specified period in the future; and
- teach and provide guidance in overall professional growth.

The *All-In-One* is designed to show the student’s progress from the beginning of the field experience to the end of the field experience. In this light, all parties will be able to see the scaffolding of student learning.

In the event of a serious performance issue, the liaison will be notified immediately.

Written documentation will be required and should reflect situations where the concern exists in relation to a student’s performance. The field instructor, student, and liaison will agree upon an ongoing monitoring of the issue through resolution. The Director of Field Education will be advised of the situation and a performance improvement plan will be developed when necessary. In the event that the student issue or concern is not resolved, field policies and procedures will be followed as outlined in the *UTSA Student Handbook and Field Manual*.

The field instructor is responsible for completion of all evaluations with input from the student.

Performance evaluations are to be written and submitted upon completion of the required number of hours designated for each semester of field practicum. The grading system for all field practicum and integrative seminar courses are based on a letter grade (A+, A, A-, B+, B, B-, etc.). The student must perform at a “B” level (84 using the numerical grade) or better in order to obtain a passing grade for the course. During this process, the student has a right to express difference and have this difference recorded (as an attachment, if desired). The *All-In- One* is submitted to the Field Office with respective signatures. The final field grade is then forwarded to the integrative seminar faculty member for the purposes of calculating a final course grade.

The grade assigned by the liaison cannot be submitted as a final grade until the required number of clock hours is completed. If the hours are not completed by the end of the semester due date, a grade of incomplete can be assigned with the permission of the liaison and the Field Director. If the student is completing Field I or Field III, all hours must be completed prior to the beginning of the next semester in order for the student to be able to move into Field II or Field IV.

The Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar is a three hour course, with 50% of the grade assigned for work completed as part of the integrative seminar and 50% for the field practicum. Again, the student must earn a grade of “B” (84) or better in both the field practicum and the integrative seminar in order to receive a passing grade for the course. The integrative seminar instructor is responsible for receiving the field practicum grade from the Field Office and calculating and assigning the final grade for the course.

Assessment of Student Learning - Mastery of Competencies and Practice Behaviors

The Field Practicum provides multiple opportunities for assessment as to whether students in the Program are mastering competencies and component behaviors. The educational agreement, developed using the *All in One*, is organized by competencies and component behaviors. Students and field instructors develop a list of ways that the student will be able to be assessed for each competency/component behavior. The faculty liaison then reviews the agreement, discusses recommendations for change with the student and the field instructor, and then all parties sign the agreement. At mid-semester, the liaison meets with the field instructor and student and conducts a preliminary assessment of student progress toward competencies and component behaviors assigned to that specific field course. The agreement may be adjusted if the student has not had an opportunity to demonstrate mastery of a behavior or needs additional opportunities in order to be proficient at the end of the semester. At the end of the semester, the student completes a self-reported rating of progress toward mastery of component behaviors, then meets with the field instructor, who also rates the student. The faculty liaison then meets with both the student and the field instructor to conduct a review of the student’s progress and assigns a grade based on the recommendation of the field instructor and how well the student has mastered the component behaviors and competencies.

The faculty member teaching the integrative seminar provides a similar rating of component behaviors, providing three measures each semester that are field-related: one from the student, one from the integrative seminar instructor, and one from the field instructor. At the end of Field II

and Field IV, the student, the field instructor, and the integrative seminar instructor rate the student on all component behaviors for generalist (Field II) or specialized (Field IV). This information is used by the Field Office and the faculty to determine what changes need to be made in the curriculum and the field program to increase student success at mastery of competencies and component behaviors.

Evaluation of Field Instructor and Field Practicum Site

The student's liaison is encouraged to provide feedback to the Director of Field Education regarding the experiences with the field instructor and the field practicum site at the end of the Field Practicum II and IV (SWK 5413 and SWK 5433). The evaluation instrument includes items related to requirements of the practicum site, field instructor, liaison, and overall educational experience. It is distributed to students, field instructors, and field liaisons during the orientation/informational/training sessions. At the end of these sessions, the evaluations are compiled and reviewed by the Director and Coordinator of Field Education. The evaluations are shared with the Social Work Program Evaluation Committee.

The student completes the Evaluation of Field Practicum and submits it to the Director of Field Education. Compiled results of evaluations of an agency and Field Instructor may be shared with the Field Instructor and the agency after student grades have been filed. Information is shared in a manner that insures student anonymity.

The Director of Field Education uses the evaluation data to assess success and the appropriateness of continued use of the site and/or field instructor in staggered 3, 4, & 5 year terms. In the case of significant concerns, problem solving will be used to bring the setting into required standards. If this is not successful, the Director of Field Education will bring the issue to the Department Chair for consultation for one of two actions: (1) to decline to use the practicum site or field instructor; or (2) continue to use the site or field instructor with plans for strengthening the site.

Liaison Evaluation of the Agency Setting

Liaisons provide feedback to the Director of Field Education in reference to changes, progress, and/or issues encountered. An evaluation instrument is used for this purpose.

Evaluation of the Office of Field Education

The evaluation process of the Office of Field Education begins with an evaluation instrument given to participants at the Field Practicum Applying for Field Meeting, the Field Practicum Starting Field Meeting, and the Field Instructor training. The evaluation instrument is distributed to students, faculty, liaisons, and field instructor participants to give the Director of Field Education feedback regarding content, structure, benefit, and recommendations for future training sessions. A content analysis is then conducted to assist the Director of Field Education in planning of future training sessions. The content analysis includes recommendations for changes that are shared with the Department of Social Work governing body or Curriculum Committees, students, field

instructors, and Professional Advisory Committee on an annual basis. At this annual presentation, the Director will be open to receiving recommendations for the betterment of the activities of the Field Office.

Throughout the semester, there will be opportunities for the field instructors and students to offer feedback on an informal basis during the site visits by liaisons or meetings with the Field Office.

Administrative Field Policies

Cell Phone and Computer Use

Students are expected to follow the workplace policies and procedures at the agency where they are placed. This includes all rules regarding use of agency equipment, such as telephones, computers, and fax machines. In addition, students should not give their personal cell phone number to clients. Students should not use time at the agency for personal texting, excessive personal phone calls, or completion of classroom assignments.

Students are expected to refrain from personal use of the agency computer, including checking personal e-mail, use of social networking sites such as Face Book, and use of agency computers for homework assignments.

Employment Offer

Occasionally, an agency will offer a student a paid position during the practicum. If this should occur, the student is required to immediately contact the Field Office for guidance. Each situation will be assessed on an individual basis, with factors, such as the student's progress in the program, length of time until graduation, and progress in field taken into consideration. In some situations, the student may accept the employment, but be required to complete the field hours at another agency.

Inclement Weather

Students are expected to attend field practicum during inclement weather if the practicum site is open, unless the student lives in an area where inclement weather is hazardous. In this case, the student must contact the field instructor immediately. The University may also close for business due to inclement weather. Students may telephone (210) 458-SNOW for information regarding University closure. If the site closes due to inclement weather when a student is scheduled to be in attendance, students are not required to attend practicum. Student will make arrangements with the field instructor to make up these lost clock hours.

Holidays and Semester Breaks

Students are entitled to observe UTSA holidays. However, during prolonged semester breaks, the student's absence from the agency may create problems in terms of continuity of service to clients. Therefore, students and field instructors should determine, as part of the Educational Agreement, the student's holiday schedule, including expectations for holidays such as spring break. Students may choose to attend field practicum during semester breaks, but these hours may not be used to complete the practicum early. Rather, these hours may be used to reduce the

weekly hours expected during the remainder of the semester. It is critical for students to be in field practicum while classes are in session so that they will continue to have the learning opportunities needed to support classroom assignments and so agencies can assign professional duties within known temporal parameters.

Sick Family/Leave

In case of illness or other medical conditions necessitating absence from the field practicum setting, students shall notify the field instructor and take responsibility for canceling or rescheduling appointments and/or meetings. Hours missed must be made up at a time agreed upon by the student and field instructor. If the student's absence exceeds two consecutive days, the liaison should be notified.

Supervision of Student Activities

Field instructors must be on site with the student for the majority of the time.

Accessibility of the field instructor by student and liaison is paramount to success of the student's field experience. Contingencies should be arranged for contact with the field instructor when she/he is off site.

Students should not be left alone in the agency without professional staff. Students, no matter how experienced or skilled, are not prepared to take on those types of staff activities.

Travel

It is the student's responsibility to secure transportation to and from the field practicum setting, and to pay any parking costs associated with the site. It is also the student's responsibility to provide his/her own automobile liability insurance coverage for practicum site-related travel. "On the job" travel to make home visits or travel to and from meetings or multiple agency sites should be the responsibility of the agency, and should be congruent with the agency reimbursement policies and rates for their employees.

The student must ask the field instructor if the agency will reimburse the student for mileage that is associated with the practicum experience. University policy requires that students inform the Office of Field Education when they plan to travel outside of San Antonio for field-related activities. The travel must be related to the field practicum assignment. A Request for Travel Authorization form must be completed and approved prior to this travel through the Social Work Department Administrative Associates.

Transporting Clients

Students may not transport clients during their field practicum experience either in their own or agency vehicles. They may accompany clients using public transportation.

Policy on Student Safety in the Field

It is imperative that students feel safe in order to carry out their responsibilities in field. Practicum sites should provide reasonable measures to protect students' safety. Agencies lacking a safety

policy or procedure should work with the field instructor and student to develop a safety plan. Each agency is responsible for orienting field students to the safety policies and procedures of that setting during the agency orientation, as well as in the supervision. Students should be made aware of and have access to any technological resources the agency utilizes to enhance the safety of students. This includes systems internal to the agency, as well as mobile and personal safety devices. Each student is responsible for discussing safety concerns with his or her Field Instructor. It is important to discuss guidelines for prevention, as well as crisis/safety plans. Such discussions should also include, but not be limited to, safety issues in the community, during home visits, within the agency building and vicinities, with particular clients prone to violent behavior, and the security of personal belongings. In any event, students cannot be required to transport clients in their automobiles. If safety concerns arise for a student, it is important that the student discuss these safety concerns with their field instructor. If, after gathering information to realistically assess the situation and learn how to provide appropriate protection, the student still does not feel safe, they may consult with the field liaison for assistance. Students should not be left to staff an office or see clients when no other staff are present in the agency. Students should refer to the UTSA Social Work Department's safety training resource annually and as needed to remain informed and educated on safety in the practicum setting.

If a student is threatened or injured while in field instruction or involved in an incident where their safety is compromised, the incident should be reported immediately to the field liaison and the field office (Field Director) 210-458-3009.

Policy on Home Visits

It is not uncommon for social workers in a variety of settings to conduct home visits. Such visits expose you to risks. Students should not make home visits alone unless the field instructor has an in-depth knowledge of the client and community, and had determined risk appears minimal. Students may make home visits in pairs. It is important that all home visits be made with the full knowledge of your field instructor, including time of departure, time of return, as well as other activities while on the trip. Take steps to reduce risk prior to the home visit. This includes being mindful of neighborhood, dynamics, and recent conflicts in the setting. Do not conduct a home visit when you feel uncomfortable or threatened in the situation. Return to the agency and report your experiences to your field instructor. Beware of dogs, other household pets and other dangers that might be a threat. Suspend the home visit if the use of alcohol or substances is detected. It may be appropriate for you to make visits accompanied by your field instructor. Do not take risks.

900 Policy

The Program uses the BSW Field Verification Form (included in appendix) to verify successful completion of BSW field and document number of hours completed in BSW field, and number of hours needed to ensure 900 total practicum hours upon MSW degree completion. This form is to remain within the Social Work Department. The Graduate Advisor of Record, notifies the student of the additional hours required (if any) in addition to the 450 required in the Specialized practicum at UTSA. The Field Office will document the student(s) additional hours needed and coordinate with each student individually to develop a plan for completion of additional hours to total at least 900 hours. Students are advised of expectations regarding number of Field hours at various points during the program, including the following:

- GAR advises student of the deficit in hours in the Acceptance Letter.
- Field Director/Field Coordinator will advise student(s) during New Student Orientation. Students will be advised to meet with Field Director/Field Coordinator during the first month of entry into the Program.
- During the preplacement interview with Field Director/Field Coordinator.
- During Starting Field Training.

Policy regarding completing Generalist and Specialized Practicums at different agencies.

In order to provide a broad spectrum of learning opportunities, students' Specialized placement will be in an agency other than the agency student was placed for the Generalist practicum.

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APPENDICES

[CSWE EDUCATIONAL POLICY AND ACCREDITATION STANDARDS](#)

[NASW CODE OF ETHICS](#)

[NASW STANDARDS FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE](#)

[TEXAS STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS CODE OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF PRACTICE](#)

[UTSA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENT STANDARDS](#)

[SELECTED UTSA POLICIES](#)

[MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK REQUIREMENTS AND COURSE DESCRIPTIONS](#)

CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

Purpose: Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

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

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels shapes the profession's future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, the promotion of evidence-informed practice through scientific inquiry, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community.

Social work education is advanced by the scholarship of teaching and learning, and scientific inquiry into its multifaceted dimensions, processes, and outcomes.

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

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

Program Mission and Goals

Educational Policy 1.0—Program Mission and Goals

The mission and goals of each social work program address the profession's purpose, are grounded in core professional values, and are informed by program context.

Values

Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work. These values underpin the explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the

profession's commitment to respect for all people and the quest for social and economic justice.

Program Context

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

Accreditation Standard 1.0—Program Mission and Goals

- 1.0.1 The program submits its mission statement and explains how it is consistent with the profession's purpose and values.
- 1.0.2 The program explains how its mission is consistent with the institutional mission and the program's context across all program options.
- 1.0.3 The program identifies its goals and demonstrates how they are derived from the program's mission.

Explicit Curriculum

The explicit curriculum constitutes the program's formal educational structure and includes the courses and field education used for each of its program options. Social work education is grounded in the liberal arts, which provide the intellectual basis for the professional curriculum and inform its design. Using a competency-based education framework, the explicit curriculum prepares students for professional practice at the baccalaureate and master's levels.

Baccalaureate programs prepare students for generalist practice. Master's programs prepare students for generalist practice and specialized practice. The explicit curriculum, including field education, may include forms of technology as a component of the curriculum.

Educational Policy 2.0—Generalist Practice

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to

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

Accreditation Standard M2.0—Generalist Practice

- M 2.0.1 The program explains how its mission and goals are consistent with generalist practice as defined in EP 2.0.
- M2.0.2 The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for generalist practice demonstrating how it is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.
- M2.0.3 The program provides a matrix that illustrates how its generalist practice content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

Educational Policy M2.1—Specialized Practice

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

Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

Accreditation Standard M2.1—Specialized Practice

- M 2.1.1 The program identifies its area(s) of specialized practice (EP M2.1), and demonstrates how it builds on generalist practice.
- M 2.1. 2 The program provides a rationale for its formal curriculum design for specialized practice demonstrating how the design is used to develop a coherent and integrated curriculum for both classroom and field.
- M2.1.3 The program describes how its area(s) of specialized practice extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies (and any

additional competencies developed by the program) to prepare students for practice in the area(s) of specialization.

- M 2.1. 4 For each area of specialized practice, the program provides a matrix that illustrates how its curriculum content implements the nine required social work competencies and any additional competencies added by the program.

Educational Policy 2.2—Signature Pedagogy: Field Education

Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and of socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline—to think, to perform, and to act ethically and with integrity. Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. The intent of field education is to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the Social Work Competencies. Field education may integrate forms of technology as a component of the program.

Accreditation Standard 2.2—Field Education

- 2.2.1 The program explains how its field education program connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom and field settings.
- M2.2.2 The program explains how its field education program provides generalist practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings.
- M2.2.3 The program explains how its field education program provides specialized practice opportunities for students to demonstrate social work competencies within an area of specialized practice and illustrates how this is accomplished in field settings.
- 2.2.4 The program explains how students across all program options in its field education program demonstrate social work competencies through in-person contact with clients and constituencies.
- 2.2.5 The program describes how its field education program provides a minimum of 400 hours of field education for baccalaureate programs and a minimum of 900 hours for master's programs.

- 2.2.6 The program provides its criteria for admission into field education and explains how its field education program admits only those students who have met the program's specified criteria.
- 2.2.7 The program describes how its field education program specifies policies, criteria, and procedures for selecting field settings; placing and monitoring students; supporting student safety; and evaluating student learning and field setting effectiveness congruent with the social work competencies.
- 2.2.8 The program describes how its field education program maintains contact with field settings across all program options. The program explains how on-site contact or other methods are used to monitor student learning and field setting effectiveness.
- M2.2.9 The program describes how its field education program specifies the credentials and practice experience of its field instructors necessary to design field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program social work competencies. Field instructors for master's students hold a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and have 2 years post-master's social work practice experience. For cases in which a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree or does not have the required experience, the program assumes responsibility for reinforcing a social work perspective and describes how this is accomplished.
- 2.2.10 The program describes how its field education program provides orientation, field instruction training, and continuing dialog with field education settings and field instructors.
- 2.2.11 The program describes how its field education program develops policies regarding field placements in an organization in which the student is also employed. To ensure the role of student as learner, student assignments and field education supervision are not the same as those of the student's employment.

Implicit Curriculum

The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program's commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty; administrative structure; and resources. The implicit curriculum is manifested through policies that are fair and transparent in substance and implementation, the qualifications of the faculty, and the adequacy and fair distribution of

resources. The culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; the support for difference and diversity; and the values and priorities in the educational environment, including the field setting, inform the student's learning and development. The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program's graduates. Heightened awareness of the importance of the implicit curriculum promotes an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession and the mission, goals, and context of the program.

Educational Policy 3.0—Diversity

The program's expectation for diversity is reflected in its learning environment, which provides the context through which students learn about differences, to value and respect diversity, and develop a commitment to cultural humility. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The learning environment consists of the program's institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speaker series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives; and the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body.

Accreditation Standard 3.0—Diversity

- 3.0.1 The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment that models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.
- 3.0.2 The program explains how these efforts provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- 3.0.3 The program describes specific plans to continually improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

Educational Policy 3.1—Student Development

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

Accreditation Standard 3.1—Student Development: Admissions; Advisement, Retention, and Termination; and Student Participation

Admissions

- M 3.1.1 The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission to the social work program. The criteria for admission to the master's program must include an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association. Baccalaureate social work graduates entering master's social work programs are not to repeat what has been achieved in their baccalaureate social work programs.
- 3.1.2 The program describes the policies and procedures for evaluating applications and notifying applicants of the decision and any contingent conditions associated with admission.
- M 3.1.3 The program describes the policies and procedures used for awarding advanced standing.
- The program indicates that advanced standing is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate social work programs accredited by CSWE, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services,* or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.
- 3.1.4 The program describes its policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits.
- 3.1.5 The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

Advisement, retention, and termination

- 3.1.6 The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.
- 3.1.7 The program submits its policies and procedures for evaluating student's academic and professional performance, including grievance policies and procedures. The program describes how it informs students of its criteria for evaluating their academic and professional performance and its policies and procedures for grievance.
- 3.1.8 The program submits its policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment in the social work program for reasons of

academic and professional performance. The program describes how it informs students of these policies and procedures.

Student participation

- 3.1.9 The program submits its policies and procedures specifying students' rights and opportunities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.
- 3.1.10 The program describes how it provides opportunities and encourages students to organize in their interests.

Educational Policy 3.2—Faculty

Faculty qualifications, including experience related to the Social Work Competencies, an appropriate student-faculty ratio, and sufficient faculty to carry out a program's mission and goals, are essential for developing an educational environment that promotes, emulates, and teaches students the knowledge, values, and skills expected of professional social workers. Through their teaching, research, scholarship, and service—as well as their interactions with one another, administration, students, and community—the program's faculty models the behavior and values expected of professional social workers. Programs demonstrate that faculty is qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned.

Accreditation Standard 3.2—Faculty

- 3.2.1 The program identifies each full- and part-time social work faculty member and discusses his or her qualifications, competence, expertise in social work education and practice, and years of service to the program.
- 3.2.2 The program documents that faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.
- 3.2.3 The program documents a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and not greater than 1:12 for master's programs and explains how this ratio is calculated. In addition, the program explains how faculty size is commensurate with the number and type of curricular offerings in class and field; number of program options; class size; number of students; advising; and the faculty's teaching, scholarly, and service responsibilities.
- M3.2.4 The master's social work program identifies no fewer than six full-time faculty with master's degrees in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and whose principal assignment is to the master's program. The majority of the full-time master's social work

program faculty has a master's degree in social work and a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.

- 3.2.5 The program describes its faculty workload policy and discusses how the policy supports the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.
- 3.2.6 Faculty demonstrate ongoing professional development as teachers, scholars, and practitioners through dissemination of research and scholarship, exchanges with external constituencies such as practitioners and agencies, and through other professionally relevant creative activities that support the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.
- 3.2.7 The program demonstrates how its faculty models the behavior and values of the profession in the program's educational environment.

Educational Policy 3.3—Administrative and Governance Structure

Social work faculty and administrators, based on their education, knowledge, and skills, are best suited to make decisions regarding the delivery of social work education. Faculty and administrators exercise autonomy in designing an administrative and leadership structure, developing curriculum, and formulating and implementing policies that support the education of competent social workers. The administrative structure is sufficient to carry out the program's mission and goals. In recognition of the importance of field education as the signature pedagogy, programs must provide an administrative structure and adequate resources for systematically designing, supervising, coordinating, and evaluating field education across all program options.

Accreditation Standard 3.3—Administrative Structure

- 3.3.1 The program describes its administrative structure and shows how it provides the necessary autonomy to achieve the program's mission and goals.
- 3.3.2 The program describes how the social work faculty has responsibility for defining program curriculum consistent with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the institution's policies.
- 3.3.3 The program describes how the administration and faculty of the social work program participate in formulating and implementing policies related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure of program personnel.
- 3.3.4 The program identifies the social work program director. Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's

programs appoint a separate director for each.

- M3.3.4(a) The program describes the master's program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program. In addition, it is preferred that the master's program director have a doctoral degree, preferably in social work.
- M3.3.4(b) The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work master's program.
- M3.3.4(c) The program describes the procedures for determining the program director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions specific to responsibilities of the social work program, a minimum of 50% assigned time is required at the master's level. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.
- 3.3.5 The program identifies the field education director.
 - 3.3.5(a) The program describes the field director's ability to provide leadership in the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.
 - M3.3.5(b) The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.
 - M3.3.5(c) The program describes the procedures for calculating the field director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field education program at least 50% assigned time is required for master's programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.
- 3.3.6 The program describes its administrative structure for field education and explains how its resources (personnel, time and technological support) are sufficient to administer its field education program to meet its mission and goals.

Educational Policy 3.4—Resources

Adequate resources are fundamental to creating, maintaining, and improving an educational environment that supports the development of competent social work practitioners. Social work programs have the necessary resources to carry out the program's mission and goals and to support learning and professionalization of students and program improvement.

Accreditation Standard 3.4—Resources

- 3.4.1 The program describes the procedures for budget development and administration it uses to achieve its mission and goals. The program submits a completed budget form and explains how its financial resources are sufficient and stable to achieve its mission and goals.
- 3.4.2 The program describes how it uses resources to address challenges and continuously improve the program.
- 3.4.3 The program demonstrates that it has sufficient support staff, other personnel, and technological resources to support all of its educational activities, mission and goals.
- 3.4.4 The program submits a library report that demonstrates access to social work and other informational and educational resources necessary for achieving its mission and goals.
- 3.4.5 The program describes and demonstrates sufficient office and classroom space and/or computer-mediated access to achieve its mission and goals.
- 3.4.6 The program describes, for each program option, the availability of and access to assistive technology, including materials in alternative formats.

Educational Policy 4.0—Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment is an integral component of competency-based education. Assessment involves the systematic gathering of data about student performance of Social Work Competencies at both the generalist and specialized levels of practice.

Competence is perceived as holistic, involving both performance and the knowledge, values, critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment that inform performance. Assessment therefore must be multi-dimensional and integrated to capture the demonstration of the competencies and the quality of internal processing informing the performance of the competencies. Assessment is best done while students are engaged in practice tasks or activities that approximate social work practice as closely as possible. Practice often requires the performance of multiple competencies simultaneously; therefore, assessment of those competencies may optimally be carried out at the same time.

Programs assess students' demonstration of the Social Work Competencies through the use of

multi- dimensional assessment methods. Assessment methods are developed to gather data that serve as evidence of student learning outcomes and the demonstration of competence. Understanding social work practice is complex and multi-dimensional, the assessment methods used and the data collected may vary by context.

Assessment information is used to guide student learning, assess student outcomes, assess and improve effectiveness of the curriculum, and strengthen the assessment methods used.

Assessment also involves gathering data regarding the implicit curriculum, which may include but is not limited to an assessment of diversity, student development, faculty, administrative and governance structure, and resources. Data from assessment continuously inform and promote change in the explicit curriculum and the implicit curriculum to enhance attainment of Social Work Competencies.

Accreditation Standard 4.0—Assessment

- 4.0.1 The program presents its plan for ongoing assessment of student outcomes for all identified competencies in the generalist level of practice (baccalaureate social work programs) and the generalist and specialized levels of practice (master's social work programs). Assessment of competence is done by program designated faculty or field personnel. The plan includes:
- A description of the assessment procedures that detail when, where, and how each competency is assessed for each program option.
 - At least two measures assess each competency. One of the assessment measures is based on demonstration of the competency in real or simulated practice situations.
 - An explanation of how the assessment plan measures multiple dimensions of each competency, as described in EP 4.0.
 - Benchmarks for each competency, a rationale for each benchmark, and a description of how it is determined that students' performance meets the benchmark.
 - An explanation of how the program determines the percentage of students achieving the benchmark.
 - Copies of all assessment measures used to assess all identified competencies.
- 4.0.2 The program provides its most recent year of summary data and outcomes for the assessment of each of the identified competencies, specifying the percentage of students achieving program benchmarks for each program option.

- 4.0.3 The program uses Form AS 4(B) and/or Form AS 4(M) to report its most recent assessment outcomes for each program option to constituents and the public on its website and routinely updates (minimally every 2 years) its findings.
- 4.0.4 The program describes the process used to evaluate outcomes and their implications for program renewal across program options. It discusses specific changes it has made in the program based on these assessment outcomes with clear links to the data.
- 4.0.5 For each program option, the program provides its plan and summary data for the assessment of the implicit curriculum as defined in EP 4.0 from program defined stakeholders. The program discusses implications for program renewal and specific changes it has made based on these assessment outcomes

National Association of Social Workers NASW Code of Ethics

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2017 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. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

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

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

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

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all

social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

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

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

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

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

Ethical decision making is a process. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this *Code* that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and

actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this *Code*.

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

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

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference.

Violation of standards in this *Code* does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the *Code* would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

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

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional

competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this *Code of Ethics* are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this *Code*, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail, and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

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.

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 should discuss with clients the social workers' policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.
- f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide

informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

- g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients' intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and the clients' ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.
- h) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.
- i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

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.
- d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.
- e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity

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

- b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- d) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

- a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
- b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)
- d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.
- e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or

non-work-related purposes.

- f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.
- g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.
- h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

- a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. 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 others. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.
- d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.
- e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.
- f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social

workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. 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, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
- j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.
- k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.
- l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.
- m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.
- n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.
- o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any

unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

- p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.
- q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.
- r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.
- s) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with applicable laws governing records and social work licensure.
- t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- u) 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.
- v) 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.
- w) 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
- b) 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.
- c) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with

access to their records.

- d) 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, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, 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, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic 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, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

1.16 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 other services are 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.

1.17 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.

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 verbal, written, and electronic communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- 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 Sexual Relationships

- a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact (including verbal, written, electronic, or physical 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.

2.07 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, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

2.08 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.

2.09 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.

2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

- a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.
- 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, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).

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

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

- a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely) should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
- b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.
- 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, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. 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 electronic and paper 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 relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

3.05 Billing

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

3.06 Client Transfer

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

3.07 Administration

- a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.
- b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles.
- c) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

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

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

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

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

3.09 Commitments to Employers

- a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
- b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.
- c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.
- d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.
- f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.
- g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

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

action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Competence

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

4.02 Discrimination

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

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.

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 using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.
- g) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- h) 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.

- i) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- j) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- k) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- l) 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.
- m) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.
- n) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- o) 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.
- p) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare

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

6.02 Public Participation

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

6.03 Public Emergencies

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

6.04 Social and Political Action

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

For electronic version of the NASW Code of Ethics, see

<https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics-english>

National Association of Social Workers Indicators for the Achievement of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

Standard 1. Ethics and Values

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

Standard 2. Self-Awareness

Social workers shall seek to develop an understanding of their own personal, cultural values and beliefs as one way of appreciating the importance of multicultural identities in the lives of people.

Standard 3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge

Social workers shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups that they serve.

Standard 4. Cross-Cultural Skills

Social workers shall use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, and techniques that reflect the workers' understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Standard 5. Service Delivery

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

Standard 6. Empowerment and Advocacy

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

Standard 7. Diverse Workforce

Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Standard 8. Professional Education

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

Standard 9. Language Diversity

Social workers shall seek to provide or advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include use of interpreters.

Standard 10. Cross-Cultural Leadership

Social workers shall be able to communicate information about diverse client groups to other professionals.

Prepared by the NASW National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity Submitted to the NASW Board of Directors for review and approval June 16, 2006

National Association of Social Workers Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

Introduction

The *Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice* are based on the policy statement “Cultural Competence in the Social Work Profession” published in *Social Work Speaks: NASW Policy Statements* (2000b) and the *NASW Code of Ethics* (2000a), which charges social workers with the ethical responsibility to be culturally competent. Both were originally adopted by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly. The Indicators for the Achievement of the NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in the Social Work Profession are designed as an extension of the Standards to provide additional guidance on the implementation and realization of culturally competent practice.

NASW “supports and encourages the development of standards for culturally competent social work practice, a definition of expertise, and the advancement of practice models that have relevance for the range of needs and services represented by diverse client populations” (NASW, 2000b, p. 61). The material that follows is the first attempt by the profession to delineate standards for culturally competent social work practice.

The United States is constantly undergoing major demographic changes. The 1990 to 2000 population growth was the largest in American history with a dramatic increase in people of color from 20 percent to 25 percent (Perry & Mackum, 2001). Those changes alter and increase the diversity confronting social workers daily in their agencies. The complexities associated with cultural diversity in the United States affect all aspects of professional social work practice, requiring social workers to strive to deliver culturally competent services to an ever-increasing broad range of clients. The social work profession traditionally has emphasized the importance of the person-in-environment and the dual perspective, the concept that all people are part of two systems: the larger societal system and their immediate environments (Norton, 1978). Social workers using a person-in-environment framework for assessment need to include to varying degrees important cultural factors that have meaning for clients and reflect the culture of the world around them.

In the United States, cultural diversity in social work has primarily been associated with race and ethnicity, but diversity is taking on a broader meaning to include the sociocultural experiences of people of different genders, social classes, religious and spiritual beliefs, sexual orientations, ages, and physical and mental abilities. A brief review of the social work literature in the past few years points to the range of potential content areas that require culturally sensitive and culturally competent interventions. These include addressing racial identity formation for people of color as well as for white people; the interrelationship among class, race, ethnicity, and gender; working with low-income families; working with older adults; the importance of religion and spirituality in the lives of clients; the development of gender identity and sexual orientation; immigration, acculturation, and assimilation stresses; biculturalism; working with people with disabilities; empowerment skills; community building; reaching out to new populations of color; and how to

train for culturally competent models of practice. Therefore, cultural competence in social work practice implies a heightened consciousness of how clients experience their uniqueness and deal with their differences and similarities within a larger social context. The achievement of cultural competence is an ongoing process. Although these indicators describe an ideal state, the National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED) encourages social work practitioners and agency leaders to put forth good faith efforts to use them.

Definitions

The NASW Board of Directors, at its June 2001 meeting, accepted the following definitions of *culture*, *competence*, and *cultural competence* in the practice of social work. These definitions are drawn from the NASW *Code of Ethics* and *Social Work Speaks*.

Areas of Practice

“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” (NASW, 1999, p. 1).

Clients

“Clients’ is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities” (NASW, 1999, p. 1).

Culture

“The word ‘culture’ is used because it implies the integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of a racial, ethnic, religious, or social group” (NASW, 2000b, p. 61). Culture often is referred to as the totality of ways being passed on from generation to generation. The term culture includes ways in which people with disabilities or people from various religious backgrounds or people who are gay, lesbian, or transgender experience the world around them.

The Preamble to the NASW *Code of Ethics* begins by stating:

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. And goes on to say, “Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice” (NASW, 2000a, p. 1).

Second, culture is mentioned in two ethical standards:

Value: *Social Justice* and the Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice*.

This means that social workers’ social change efforts seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person* and the Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the*

inherent dignity and worth of the person. This value states that social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity.

Competence

The word competence is used because it implies having the capacity to function effectively within the context of culturally integrated patterns of human behavior defined by the group.

In the *Code of Ethics* competence is discussed in several ways. First as a value of the profession: Value: *Competence* and the Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.* This value encourages social workers to 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.

Second, competence is discussed as an ethical standard:

1.04 Competence

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.

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.

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.

Cultural competence is never fully realized, achieved, or completed, but rather cultural competence is a lifelong process for social workers who will always encounter diverse clients and new situations in their practice.

Supervisors and workers should have the expectation that cultural competence is an ongoing learning process integral and central to daily supervision.

Cultural Competence

Cultural competence refers to the process by which individuals and systems respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, languages, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, religions, and other diversity factors in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, and communities and protects and preserves the dignity of each.

“Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system or agency or among professionals and enable the system, agency, or professionals to work effectively in cross-cultural situations” (NASW, 2000b, p. 61).

Operationally defined, *cultural competence* is the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to increase the quality of services, thereby producing better outcomes (Davis & Donald, 1997). Competence in cross- cultural functioning means learning new patterns of behavior and effectively applying them in appropriate settings. Gallegos (1982) provided one of the first conceptualizations of ethnic competence as “a set of procedures and activities to be used in acquiring culturally relevant insights into the problems of minority clients and the means of applying such insights to the development of intervention strategies that are culturally appropriate for these clients.” (p. 4). This kind of sophisticated cultural competence does not come naturally to any social worker and requires a high level of professionalism and knowledge. There are five essential elements that contribute to a system’s ability to become more culturally competent. The system should (1) value diversity, (2) have the capacity for cultural self- assessment, (3) be conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact, (4) institutionalize cultural knowledge, and (5) develop programs and services that reflect an understanding of diversity between and within cultures. These five elements must be manifested in every level of the service delivery system. They should be reflected in attitudes, structures, policies, and services.

The specific Ethical Standard for culturally competent social work practice is contained under *Section 1. Social workers’ ethical responsibilities to clients*.

1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

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

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.

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.

Finally, the Code reemphasizes the importance of cultural competence in the last section of the Code, *Section 6. Social Workers Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society.*

6.04 Social and Political Action

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

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.

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.

Goals and Objectives of the Standards

These standards address the need for definition, support, and encouragement for the development of a high level of social work practice that encourages cultural competence among all social workers so that they can respond effectively, knowledgeably, sensitively, and skillfully to the diversity inherent in the agencies in which they work and with the clients and communities they serve.

These standards intend to move the discussion of cultural competence within social work practice toward the development of clearer guidelines, goals, and objectives for the future of social work practice.

The specific goals of the standards are

- to maintain and improve the quality of culturally competent services provided by social

workers and programs delivered by social service agencies to establish professional expectations so that social workers can monitor and evaluate their culturally competent practice

- to provide a framework for social workers to assess culturally competent practice
- to inform consumers, governmental regulatory bodies, and others, such as insurance carriers, about the profession's standards for culturally competent practice
- to establish specific ethical guidelines for culturally competent social work practice in agency or private practice settings
- to provide documentation of professional expectations for agencies, peer review committees, state regulatory bodies, insurance carriers, and others.

Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice

Standard 1. Ethics and Values

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

Interpretation

A major characteristic of a profession is its ability to establish ethical standards to help professionals identify ethical issues in practice and to guide them in determining what is ethically acceptable and unacceptable behavior (Reamer, 1998). Social work has developed a comprehensive set of ethical standards embodied in the *NASW Code of Ethics* that “address a wide range of issues, including, for example, social workers’ handling of confidential information, sexual contact between social workers and their clients, conflicts of interest, supervision, education and training, and social and political action” (Reamer, 1998, p. 2). The Code includes a mission statement, which sets forth several key elements in social work practice, mainly the social workers’ commitment to enhancing human well-being and helping meet basic human needs of all people; client empowerment; service to people who are vulnerable and oppressed; focus on individual well-being in a social context; promotion of social justice and social change; and *sensitivity to cultural and ethnic diversity*. Social workers clearly have an ethical responsibility to be culturally competent practitioners.

The Code recognizes that culture and ethnicity may influence how individuals cope with problems and interact with each other. What is behaviorally appropriate in one culture may seem abnormal in another. Accepted practice in one culture may be prohibited in another. To fully understand and appreciate these differences, social workers must be familiar with varying cultural traditions and norms. Clients’ cultural backgrounds may affect their help-seeking behaviors as well. The ways in which social services are planned and implemented need to be culturally sensitive to be culturally effective. Cultural competence builds on the profession’s valued stance on self-determination and individual dignity and worth, adding inclusion, tolerance, and respect for diversity in all its

forms. It requires social workers to struggle with ethical dilemmas arising from value conflicts or special needs of diverse clients such as helping clients enroll in mandated training or mental health services that are culturally insensitive. Cultural competence requires social workers to recognize the strengths that exist in all cultures. This does not imply a universal nor automatic acceptance of all practices of all cultures. For example, some cultures subjugate women, oppress persons based on sexual orientation, and value the use of corporal punishment and the death penalty.

Cultural competence in social work practice must be informed by and applied within the context of NASW's *Code of Ethics* and the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will demonstrate

1. knowledge of the NASW *Code of Ethics*
2. knowledge of social justice and human rights principles
3. ability to describe areas of conflict and accommodation between personal values, professional values, and those of other cultures.
4. ability to recognize the convergence and disparity between the values of the dominant society and the values of the historically oppressed, underrepresented, and underserved populations
5. appreciation and respect of cultural differences and strengths
6. awareness of the ethical dilemmas they may encounter when they work with diverse clients in relationship to:
 - boundaries
 - norms of behavior
 - styles of advocacy
 - diverse values and beliefs
 - dual relationships
 - styles of conflict management.

Standard 2. Self-Awareness

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

Interpretation

Cultural competence requires social workers to examine their own cultural backgrounds and

identities to increase awareness of personal assumptions, values, and biases. The workers' self-awareness of their own cultural identities is as fundamental to practice as the informed assumptions about clients' cultural backgrounds and experiences in the United States. This awareness of personal values, beliefs, and biases

inform their practice and influence relationships with clients. Cultural competence includes knowing and acknowledging how fears, ignorance, and the "isms" (racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ageism, classism) have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.

Social workers need to be able to move from being culturally aware of their own heritage to becoming culturally aware of the heritage of others. They can value and celebrate differences in others rather than maintain an ethnocentric stance and can demonstrate comfort with differences between themselves and others. They have an awareness of personal and professional limitations that may warrant the referral of a client to another social worker or agency that can best meet the clients' needs. Self-awareness also helps in understanding the process of cultural identity formation and helps guard against stereotyping. As one develops the diversity within one's own group, one can be more open to the diversity within other groups.

Cultural competence also requires social workers to appreciate how workers need to move from cultural awareness to cultural sensitivity before achieving cultural competence and to evaluate growth and development throughout these different levels of cultural competence in practice.

Self-awareness becomes the basis for professional development and should be supported by supervision and agency administration. Agency administrators and public policy advocates also need to develop strategies to reduce their own biases and expand their self-awareness.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. examine and describe their cultural background, social identities, and cultural heritage to increase awareness of assumptions, values, beliefs, and biases and recognize how these affect services and influence relationships and interactions with clients.
2. identify how absence of knowledge, fears, and "isms" (racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ageism, classism) have influenced their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.
3. develop and apply strategies to inform and change their detrimental attitudes, beliefs, and feelings.
4. demonstrate an awareness of personal or professional limitations that may warrant the referral of a client or organization to another resource that can better meet their needs and the skills to do this effectively.
5. demonstrate increased comfort with self- and other-awareness about different cultural customs and views of the world.

6. use relationships with supervisors, mentors, and colleagues to enrich self-awareness.

Standard 3. Cross-Cultural Knowledge

Social workers shall have and continue to develop specialized knowledge and understanding about the history, traditions, values, family systems, and artistic expressions of major client groups served.

Interpretation

Cultural competence is not static and requires frequent relearning and unlearning about diversity. Social workers need to take every opportunity to expand their cultural knowledge and expertise by expanding their understanding of the following areas: “the impact of culture on behavior, attitudes, and values; the help-seeking behaviors of diverse client groups; the role of language, speech patterns, and communication styles of various client groups in the communities served; the impact of social service policies on various client

groups; the resources (agencies, people, informal helping networks, and research) that can be used on behalf of diverse client groups; the ways that professional values may conflict with or accommodate the needs of diverse client groups; and the power relationships in the community, agencies, or institutions and their impact on diverse client groups” (Gallegos, pp. 7–8).

Social workers need to possess specific knowledge about the particular providers and client groups they work with, including the range of historical experiences, resettlement patterns, individual and group oppression, adjustment styles, socioeconomic backgrounds, life processes, learning styles, cognitive skills, worldviews and specific cultural customs and practices, their definition of and beliefs about the causation of wellness and illness or normality and abnormality, and how care and services should be delivered. They also must seek specialized knowledge about U.S. social, cultural, and political systems, how they operate, and how they serve or fail to serve specific client groups. This includes knowledge of institutional, class, culture, and language barriers that prevent diverse client group members from using services.

Cultural competence requires explicit knowledge of traditional theories and principles concerning such areas as human behavior, life cycle development, problem-solving skills, prevention, and rehabilitation.

Social workers need the critical skill of asking the right questions, being comfortable with discussing cultural differences, and asking clients about what works for them and what is comfortable for them in these discussions. Furthermore, culturally competent social workers need to know the limitations and strengths of current theories, processes and practice models, and which have specific applicability and relevance to the service needs of culturally diverse client groups.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. expand their cultural knowledge and expertise by studying:

- the help-seeking behaviors and pathways of diverse client groups
 - the historical context of diverse communities
 - the role of language, speech patterns, and communication styles of diverse client groups
 - the impact of social service policies on diverse groups served
 - the resources such as agencies, people, informal helping networks, and research that can be mobilized on behalf of diverse clients
2. possess specific knowledge about traditional and nontraditional providers and client groups that they serve, including:
 - historical experiences, immigration, resettlement patterns, individual and group oppression, adjustment styles, socioeconomic backgrounds, and life processes
 - learning styles, cognitive skills, worldviews, and specific cultural concerns and practices
 - definitions of and beliefs about service-related concepts such as the causation of wellness and illness, physical and psychological disorders, normality and abnormality, family roles and responsibilities, child rearing practices, birth, marriage, death and dying, and so forth
 - beliefs and practices related to how care and services should be delivered, including diverse approaches to service delivery and alternative healing options
 - factors associated with acculturation and assimilation.
 3. demonstrate knowledge of the power relationships in the community and in institutions, and how these affect diverse groups.
 4. possess specific knowledge about U.S., global, social, cultural, and political systems—how they operate and how they serve or fail to serve client groups; include knowledge about institutional, class, cultural, and language barriers to service.
 5. identify the limitations and strengths of contemporary theories and practice models and identify those that have applicability and relevance to their specific client population.
 6. recognize the heterogeneity within cultural groups and similarity across cultural groups.
 7. describe how privilege is manifested by people within different groups.
 8. describe the effects that dominant and non-dominant status has on interpersonal relations and group dynamics in the workplace.

9. distinguish between intentional and unintentional assertion of race and class privilege.
10. recognize the intersection of “isms” (for example, racism with classism) and the institutionalization of “isms”.
11. acknowledge the ways in which their membership in various social groups influences their worldview and contributes to their own patterns of privileged behavior or internalized oppression.
12. understand the interaction of the cultural systems of the social worker, client, the particular service setting, and the broader immediate community.

Standard 4. Cross-Cultural Skills

Social workers shall use appropriate methodological approaches, skills, and techniques that reflect the workers’ understanding of the role of culture in the helping process.

Interpretation

The personal attributes of a culturally competent social worker include qualities that reflect genuineness, empathy, and warmth; the capacity to respond flexibly to a range of possible solutions; an acceptance of and openness to differences among people; a willingness to learn to work with clients of different backgrounds; an articulation and clarification of stereotypes and biases and how these may accommodate or conflict with the needs of diverse client groups; and personal commitment to alleviate racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and poverty. These attributes are important to the direct practitioner and to the agency administrator.

More specifically, social workers should have the skills to

- work with a wide range of people who are culturally different or similar to themselves, and establish avenues for learning about the cultures of these clients
- assess the meaning of culture for individual clients and client groups, encourage open discussion of differences, and respond to culturally biased cues
- master interviewing techniques that reflect an understanding of the role of language in the client’s culture
- conduct a comprehensive assessment of client systems in which cultural norms and behaviors are evaluated as strengths and differentiated from problematic or symptomatic behaviors
- integrate the information gained from a culturally competent assessment into culturally appropriate intervention plans and involve clients and respect their choices in developing goals for service
- select and develop appropriate methods, skills, and techniques that are attuned to their clients’ cultural, bicultural, or marginal experiences in their environments

- generate a wide variety of verbal and nonverbal communication skills in response to direct and indirect communication styles of diverse clients
- understand the interaction of the cultural systems of the social worker, the client, the particular agency setting, and the broader immediate community
- effectively use the clients' natural support system in resolving problems—for example, folk healers, storefronts, religious and spiritual leaders, families of creation, and other community resources
- demonstrate advocacy and empowerment skills in work with clients, recognizing and combating the “isms”, stereotypes, and myths held by individuals and institutions
- identify service delivery systems or models that are appropriate to the targeted client population and make appropriate referrals when indicated
- consult with supervisors and colleagues for feedback and monitoring of performance and identify features of their own professional style that impede or enhance their culturally competent practice
- evaluate the validity and applicability of new techniques, research, and knowledge for work with diverse client groups.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. interact with persons from a wide range of cultures
2. display proficiency in discussing cultural difference with colleagues and clients.
3. develop and implement a comprehensive assessment of clients in which culturally normative behavior is differentiated from problem or symptomatic behavior.
4. assess cultural strengths and limitations/challenges and their impact on individual and group functioning, and integrate this understanding into intervention plans.
5. select and develop appropriate methods, skills, and techniques that are attuned to their clients' cultural, multicultural, or marginal experiences in their environments.
6. adapt and use a variety of culturally proficient models.
7. communicate effectively with culturally and linguistically different clients through language acquisition, proper use of interpreters, verbal and nonverbal skills, and culturally appropriate
8. protocols.
9. advocate for the use of interpreters who are both linguistically and culturally competent and prepared to work in the social services environment.
10. effectively employ the clients' natural support system in resolving problems, for example,

folk healers, indigenous remedies, religious leaders, friends, family, and other community residents and organizations.

11. advocate, negotiate, and employ empowerment skills in their work with clients.

12. consult with supervisors and colleagues for feedback and monitoring of performance and identify features of their own professional style that impede or enhance their culturally competent practice.

Standard 5. Service Delivery

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

Interpretation

Agencies and professional social work organizations need to promote cultural competence by supporting the evaluation of culturally competent service delivery models and setting standards for cultural competence within these settings. Culturally competent social workers need to be aware of and vigilant about the dynamics that result from cultural differences and similarities between workers and clients. This includes monitoring cultural competence among social workers (agency evaluations, supervision, in-service training, and feedback from clients).

Social workers need to detect and prevent exclusion of diverse clients from service opportunities and seek to create opportunities for clients, matching their needs with culturally competent service delivery systems or adapting services to better meet the culturally unique needs of clients. Furthermore, they need to foster policies and procedures that help ensure access to care that accommodates varying cultural beliefs.

For direct practitioners, policymakers, or administrators, this specifically involves

- actively recruiting multiethnic staff and including cultural competence requirements in job descriptions and performance and promotion measures
- reviewing the current and emergent demographic trends for the geographic area served by the agency to determine service needs for the provision of interpretation and translation services
- creating service delivery systems or models that are more appropriate to the targeted client populations or advocating for the creation of such services
- including participation by clients as major stakeholders in the development of service delivery systems
- ensuring that program decor and design is reflective of the cultural heritage of clients and families using the service
- attending to social issues (for example, housing, education, police, and social justice) that concern clients of diverse backgrounds

- not accepting staff remarks that insult or demean clients and their culture
- supporting the inclusion of cultural competence standards in accreditation bodies and organizational policies as well as in licensing and certification examinations
- developing staffing plans that reflect the organization and the targeted client population (for example, hiring, position descriptions, performance evaluations, training)
- developing performance measures to assess culturally competent practice
- including participation of client groups in the development of research and treatment protocols.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. identify the formal and informal resources in the community, describe their strengths and weaknesses, and facilitate referrals as indicated, tailored to the culturally relevant needs of the client.
2. actively advocate for and cooperate with efforts to create culturally competent services and programs by:
 - recruiting multiethnic/multicultural staff and including cultural competence requirements in job descriptions and performance and promotion measures
 - reviewing the current and emergent demographic trends for the geographic area served by the agency to determine needs for the provision of interpretation and translation services
 - creating service delivery systems or models that are more appropriate to the targeted client populations or advocating for the development and implementation of such services
 - including clients as major stakeholders in the participation, decision making, and evaluation of service delivery systems
 - ensuring that program decor and design is reflective of the cultural heritage of clients and families using the service
 - attending to social issues (for example, housing, education, police, and social justice) that concern clients of diverse backgrounds
 - finding effective strategies for confronting staff remarks that insult or demean clients and their culture
 - supporting the inclusion of cultural competence standards in accreditation bodies and organizational policies as well as in licensing and certification examinations

- developing staffing plans that reflect the targeted client population (for example, hiring, position descriptions, performance evaluations, training)
 - developing performance measures to assess culturally competent practice
 - supporting participation of client groups in the development of research, treatment, and intervention protocols
3. build culturally competent organizations through the following policies and practices:
- an administrative mission and purpose that embodies cultural competency/proficiency in the values, goals, and practices.
 - effective recruitment of multilingual and multicultural staff
 - staff composition reflecting the diversity of the client population
 - service planning strategy that includes an assessment/analysis of the client demographics compared to the demographic trends of the service community
 - expanded service capacity to improve the breadth and depth of services to a greater variety of cultural groups
 - meaningful inclusion of clients and community members representing relevant cultural groups in decision- making and advisory governance entities, program planning, program evaluation, and research endeavors
 - physical plant designed and decorated in a manner that is welcoming to the diverse cultural groups served
 - engagement in advocacy to improve social issues relevant to client group
 - a work climate, through formal and informal means, that addresses workforce diversity challenges and promotes respect for clients and colleagues of different backgrounds
 - documented advocacy for culturally competent policies and procedures of accrediting, licensing, certification bodies, contracting agencies, and so forth
 - inclusion of cultural competency as a component of human resource management in job descriptions, performance evaluations, promotions, training, and other areas.

Standard 6. Empowerment and Advocacy

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

Interpretation

Culturally competent social workers are keenly aware of the deleterious effects of racism,

sexism, ageism, heterosexism or homophobia, anti-Semitism, ethnocentrism, classism, and xenophobia on clients' lives and the need for social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse clients and communities.

As first defined by Solomon (1976), *empowerment* involves facilitating the clients' connection with their own power and, in turn, being empowered by the very act of reaching across cultural barriers. Empowerment refers to the person's ability to do for themselves while advocacy implies doing for the client. Even in the act of advocacy, social workers must be careful not to impose their values on clients and must seek to understand what clients mean by advocacy. Respectful collaboration needs to take place to promote mutually agreed-on goals for change.

Social workers need a range of skills and abilities to advocate for and with clients against the underlying devaluation of cultural experiences related to difference and oppression and power and privilege in the United States. The empowerment tradition in social work practice suggests a promotion of the combined goals of consciousness raising and developing a sense of personal power and skills while working toward social change. Best practice views this as a process and outcome of the empowerment perspective (Gutiérrez, 1990; Simon, 1994). Social workers using this standard will apply an ecosystems perspective and a strengths orientation in practice. This means that workers consider client situations as they describe needs in terms of transitory challenges rather than fixed problems.

According to Gutiérrez and Lewis (1999), empowerment is a model for practice, a perspective and a set of skills and techniques. The expectation is that culturally competent social workers reflect these values in their practice.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. advocate for public policies that respect the cultural values, norms, and behaviors of diverse groups and communities.
2. select appropriate intervention strategies to help colleagues, collaborating partners, and institutional representatives examine their own awareness and lack of awareness and behavioral consequences of the "isms," such as exclusionary behaviors, or oppressive policies by
 - assessing level of readiness for feedback and intervention of the dominant group member.
 - selecting either education, dialogue, increased intergroup contact, social advocacy, or social action as a strategy.
 - participating in social advocacy and social action to better empower diverse clients and communities at the local, state, and/or national level.
3. use practice methods and approaches that help the client facilitate a connection with their own power in a manner that is appropriate for their

cultural context.

4. provide support to diverse cultural groups who are advocating on their own behalf.
5. partner, collaborate, and ally with client groups in advocacy efforts.
6. work to increase the client group's skills and sense of self-efficacy as social change agents.
7. demonstrate appropriate thoughtfulness regarding the role of their own personal values, particularly in terms of when to assert personal values during advocacy work and when to avoid imposing personal values during empowerment work.
8. demonstrate intentional effort to assure that one does not impose one's own personal values in practice.

Standard 7. Diverse Workforce

Social workers shall support and advocate for recruitment, admissions and hiring, and retention efforts in social work programs and agencies that ensure diversity within the profession.

Interpretation

Increasing cultural competence within the profession requires demonstrated efforts to recruit and retain a diverse cadre of social workers, many of whom would bring some "indigenous" cultural competence to the profession as well as demonstrated efforts to increase avenues for the acquisition of culturally competent skills by all social workers. Diversity should be represented at all levels of the organization, and not just among direct practitioners.

The social work profession has espoused a commitment to diversity, inclusion, and affirmative action. However, available statistics indicate that in the United States social workers are predominantly white (88.5 percent) and female (78.0 percent). The proportion of people of color has remained relatively stable in the social work membership of the National Association of Social Workers over a period of several years: 5.3 percent identify themselves as African American; Hispanics, including Mexican Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanic groups constitute about 2.8 percent of the membership; Asians and Pacific Islanders 1.7 percent; and American Indians/First Nations People 0.5 percent (Gibelman & Schervish, 1997).

Social work client populations are more diverse than the social work profession itself. In many instances, service to clients is targeted to marginalized communities and special populations, groups that typically include disproportionately high numbers of people of color, elderly people, people with disabilities, and clients of lower socioeconomic status.

Matching workforce to client populations can be an effective strategy for bridging cultural differences between social worker and client, although it cannot be the only strategy. The assumption is that individuals of similar backgrounds can understand each other better and communicate more effectively (Jackson & López, 1999). Yet an equally compelling fact is that "the majority of clinicians from the mainstream dominant culture will routinely provide care for large

numbers of patients of diverse ethnic and/or cultural backgrounds. Clearly increasing the numbers of culturally diverse social workers is not sufficient. Even these professionals will need to be able to provide care for patients who are not like themselves” (Jackson & López, 1999, p. 4). In addition, culturally competent social workers who bring a special skill or knowledge to the profession, like bicultural and bilingual skills, or American Sign Language (ASL) skills, are entitled to professional equity and should not be exploited for their expertise but should be appropriately compensated for skills that enhance the delivery of services to clients.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. advocate for and support human resource policies and procedures that ensure diversity and inclusion within their organization.
2. work to achieve a workforce and organization that reflects the demographics of the population served throughout all levels of the organization.
3. advocate for and support policies that assure equity and appropriate compensations for social workers who bring special skills or knowledge to the profession, such as bicultural and bilingual skills or American Sign Language skills.
4. advocate for and support recruitment and retention strategies that increase the diversity within the profession through social work programs and schools of social work.
5. promote and maintain the expectation that all staff, regardless of cultural membership, continuously engage in the process of improving cultural proficiency and capacity to serve a variety of populations.

Culturally competent organizations will

1. develop and implement human resource and other organizational policies, procedures, and practices that support staff diversity.
2. develop and implement policies, procedures, and practices that effectively address the dynamics of a diverse workforce.
3. regularly monitor the extent to which their management and staff composition reflect the diversity of the client population.
4. take corrective action as appropriate and refocus recruitment efforts; review their selection policies for inadvertent exclusion of the underrepresented, underserved, and oppressed cultural group.
5. regularly monitor and take remedial action as needed to ensure that client groups may receive services in their native or preferred language by
 - actively recruiting and seeking to retain multilingual staff.
 - providing “second language” courses to existing staff.

- providing appropriate compensations for social workers who bring special language skill or knowledge to the profession, such as bicultural and bilingual skills or American Sign Language skills.
- 6. include cultural competency as a requirement for job performance by including these requirements in job descriptions, performance evaluations, promotions, and training.
- 7. foster a work climate, through formal and informal means, that addresses workforce diversity challenges and promotes respect for clients and colleagues of different backgrounds.
- 8. establish cultural norms of openness and respect for discussing situations in which insensitive or exclusionary behaviors were experienced.

Standard 8. Professional Education

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

Interpretation

Cultural competence is a vital link between the theoretical and practice knowledge base that defines social work expertise. Social work is a practice-oriented profession, and social work education and training need to keep up with and stay ahead of changes in professional practice, which includes the changing needs of diverse client populations. Diversity needs to be addressed in social work curricula and needs to be viewed as central to faculty and staff appointments and research agendas.

The social work profession should be encouraged to take steps to ensure cultural competence as an integral part of social work education, training and practice, and to increase research and scholarship on culturally competent

practice among social work professionals. This includes undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs in social work as well as post-master's training, continuing education, and meetings of the profession. Social agencies should be encouraged to provide culturally competent in-service training and opportunities for continuing education for agency-based workers. NASW should contribute to the ongoing education and training needs for all social workers, with particular emphasis on promoting culturally competent practice in continuing education offerings in terms of content, faculty, and auspice.

In addition, the NASW *Code of Ethics* clearly states, "Social workers who provide supervision and consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries" (p. 14). This highlights the importance of providing culturally sensitive supervision and field instruction, as well as the pivotal role of supervisors and field instructors in promoting culturally competent practice among workers and students.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. promote professional education that advances cultural competency within the profession.
2. advocate for the infusion and integration of cultural competency standards in social work curricula and research in the BSW, MSW, and PhD levels.
3. promote and enhance culturally competent knowledge by encouraging and conducting research that develops conceptual, theoretical, and practice skills that can guide practice.
4. advocate for state-of-the-art professional education on diversity and working with diverse populations.
5. train staff in cross-cultural communication, culturally diverse customs, and techniques for resolving racial, ethnic, or cultural conflicts between staff and the clients served.

Culturally competent organizations will

1. provide ongoing training, leadership, and support for improving cultural competency skills to all employees, including top management, middle management, frontline supervisors, frontline staff, and administrative/custodial staff.
2. resolve racial, ethnic, or cultural conflicts between staff and the clients served and among employees within the organization itself.
3. conduct evaluation research to determine their effectiveness in serving or interacting with culturally diverse client groups.

Standard 9. Language Diversity

Social workers shall seek to provide and advocate for the provision of information, referrals, and services in the language appropriate to the client, which may include the use of interpreters.

Interpretation

Social workers should accept the individual person in his or her totality and ensure access to needed services. Language is a source and an extension of personal identity and culture and therefore, is one way individuals interact with others in their families and communities and across different cultural groups. Individuals and groups have a right to use their language in their individual and communal life.

Language diversity is a resource for society, and linguistic diversity should be preserved and promoted. The essence of the social work profession is to promote social justice and eliminate discrimination and oppression based on linguistic or other diversities. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act clarifies the obligation of agencies and service providers to not discriminate or have methods of administering services that may subject individuals to discrimination.

Agencies and providers of services are expected to take reasonable steps to provide services and

information in appropriate language other than English to ensure that people with limited English proficiency are effectively informed and can effectively participate in and benefit from its programs.

It is the responsibility of social services agencies and social workers to provide clients services in the language of their choice or to seek the assistance of qualified language interpreters. Social workers need to communicate respectfully and effectively with clients from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds; this might include knowing the client's language. The use of language translation should be done by trained professional interpreters (for example, certified or registered sign language interpreters). Interpreters generally need proficiency in both English and the other language, as well as orientation and training.

Social agencies and social workers have a responsibility to use language interpreters when necessary, and to make certain that interpreters do not breach confidentiality, create barriers to clients when revealing personal information that is critical to their situation, are properly trained and oriented to the ethics of interpreting in a helping situation, and have fundamental knowledge of specialized terms and concepts specific to the agency's programs or activities.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. demonstrate an understanding that language is part of the social identity of a client.
2. advocate for rights of individuals and groups to receive resources in their own language.
3. provide and advocate for information, referrals, and services in an appropriate language for the client.
4. provide jargon-free, easy-to-read material.
5. use descriptive and graphic representations (for example, pictures, symbol formats) for individuals with limited proficiency in the dominant language or with limited literacy in their own language.
6. advocate for the preservation and appreciation of language diversity among clients.
7. advocate for reasonable accommodations of the client's language needs, including the provision of professional sign language interpreters and translators.
8. improve their own ability to speak, read, write and understand the languages and dialects of their clients without attempting to engage in dialogue that is beyond their own skill level.
9. check to ensure accurate communication, realizing that there can be significant variations of word usage and colloquialisms within the same language family based on nationality or region.
10. prepare themselves to work effectively with interpreters and translators (for example, attend workshops, seek consultation from interpretation and translation services, become

familiar with standards for professional interpretation, become familiar with techniques of translation and back-translation) and advocate for appropriate agency policies to support the effective use of and orientation for interpreters and translators.

Standard 10. Cross-Cultural Leadership

Social workers shall be able to communicate information about diverse client groups to other professionals.

Interpretation

Social work is the appropriate profession to take a leadership role not only in disseminating knowledge about diverse client groups, but also in actively advocating for fair and equitable treatment of all clients served. This role should extend within and outside the profession.

Guided by the *NASW Code of Ethics*, social work leadership is the communication of vision to create proactive processes that empower individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Diversity skills, defined as sensitivity to diversity, multicultural leadership, acceptance and tolerance, cultural competence, and tolerance of ambiguity, constitute one of the core leadership skills for successful leadership (Rank & Hutchison, 2000). Social workers should come forth to assume leadership in empowering diverse client populations, to share information about diverse populations to the general public, and to advocate for their clients' concerns at interpersonal and institutional levels, locally, nationally, and internationally.

With the establishment of standards for cultural competence in social work practice, there is an equally important need for the profession to provide ongoing training in cultural competence and to establish mechanisms for the evaluation of competence-based practice. As the social work profession develops cultural competencies, then the profession must have the ability to measure those competencies. The development of outcome measures needs to go hand in hand with the development of these standards.

Indicators

Culturally competent social workers will

1. take leadership roles and take responsibility to promote cultural competence within the social work profession.
2. take leadership roles in communicating and disseminating information on cultural competency and client diversity to other professions through activities such as serving on committees, making presentations, writing articles, developing guidelines, and conducting research.
3. take leadership roles in empowering diverse clients to assume advocacy roles within own organization and in the community.
4. advocate for fair and equitable treatment for diverse groups in and outside of profession.
5. create a proactive process that empowers individuals, families, groups, organizations, and

communities.

6. establish strategies for people and organizations within the profession to share information and learning with one another on how to engage in culturally competent behavior and promote culturally competent practices and policies.
7. model culturally competent behavior in their interactions with client groups, other professionals, and each other.

Note: These standards build on and adhere to other standards of social work practice established by NASW, including, but not limited to, NASW Standards for the Classification of Social Work Practice, Standards for the Practice of Clinical Social Work, Standards for Social Work Case Management, Standards for Social Work Practice in Child Protection, Standards for School Social Work Services, Standards for Social Work in Health Care Settings, Standards for Social Work Personnel Practices, and Standards for Social Work Services in Long-Term Care Facilities.

Free information on the Standards is located on the NASW Web site: www.socialworkers.org.

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners Code of Conduct

Title 22 of the Texas Administrative Code, §781.201:

Code of Conduct. (a) A social worker must observe and comply with the code of conduct and standards of practice set forth in this subchapter. Any violation of the code of conduct or standards of practice will constitute unethical conduct or conduct that discredits or tends to discredit the profession of social work and is grounds for disciplinary action.

(1) A social worker shall not refuse to perform any act or service for which the person is licensed solely on the basis of a client's age; gender; race; color; religion; national origin; disability; sexual orientation; gender identity and expression; or political affiliation.

(2) A social worker shall truthfully report her or his services, professional credentials and qualifications to clients or potential clients. A social worker shall not advertise or claim a degree from a college or university which is not accredited by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation.

(3) A social worker shall only offer those services that are within his or her professional competency, and shall provide services within accepted professional standards of practice, appropriate to the client's needs.

(4) A social worker shall strive to maintain and improve her or his professional knowledge, skills and abilities.

(5) A social worker shall base all services on an assessment, evaluation or diagnosis of the client.

(6) A social worker shall provide the client with a clear description of services, schedules, fees and billing at the initiation of services.

(7) A social worker shall safeguard the client's rights to confidentiality within the limits of the law.

(8) A social worker shall be responsible for setting and maintaining professional boundaries.

(9) A social worker shall not have sexual contact with a client or a person who has been a client.

(10) A social worker shall refrain from providing services while impaired by physical health, mental health, medical condition, or by medication, drugs or alcohol.

(11) A social worker shall not exploit his or her position of trust with a client or former client.

(12) A social worker shall evaluate a client's progress on a continuing basis to guide service delivery and will make use of supervision and consultation as indicated by the client's needs.

(13) A social worker shall refer a client for those services that the social worker is unable to meet, and shall terminate services to a client when continuing to provide services is no longer in the client's best interest.

(b) The grounds for disciplinary action of a social worker shall be based on the code of conduct or standards of practice in effect at the time of the violation.

If you have a question about the professional performance of a social worker licensed by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners call toll-free at 1-800-232-3162. In Austin, call (512) 719-3521 or write to:

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners
P.O. Box 149347, Mail Code 1982
Austin, Texas 78714-9347
www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork
1-800-942-5540 (Complaint Hotline)

University Of Texas at San Antonio Department of Social Work Student Standards

Approved July 2007

Revised May 2016 College name updated 2020

1.0 Introduction

This document represents the Student Standards for the Department of Social Work that apply to graduate students enrolled in the Department of Social Work, College for Health, Community and Policy at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Department of Social Work administrators and faculty are committed to insure the successes of graduate social work students upon admission to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Faculty and administrators also have a responsibility to determine a student's readiness to enter the social work profession.

Therefore, this document outlines policies and procedures for academic expectations, including scholastic and professional expectations of students. These standards have been reviewed by graduate social work students enrolled in our Program, faculty, and administration and approved by UTSA administrators.

Because of the nature of professional social work practice, the Department of Social Work has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address academic and/or performance concerns. The ultimate goal of the Standards is to help students have a successful experience in the Department of Social Work.

Professional social work learning is an ongoing developmental process. The National Association of Social Workers, the national organization of the social work profession, sets forth a Code of Ethics for the profession, and a process for sanctioning social workers if they are found to have violated the code. Thus, it is critical that social work education programs serve as both socializers to and gatekeepers of the profession. Students are not expected to meet the criteria set forth in the standards at the same performance level when they begin the program as when they leave it. Students, however, will continuously strive to achieve the academic (scholastic and professional) performance standard criteria appropriate for their respective developmental level. Faculty (including adjunct), administrators, field instructors, and community field liaisons will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career, utilizing the Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form where necessary. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process.

All graduate Master of Social Work (MSW) students are personally responsible for reading,

studying, and abiding by the following documents to educate themselves on social work professional standards as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners.

- *CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*
- *NASW Code of Ethics*
- *Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct*
- *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*
- *UTSA Department of Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual*
- *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form and Competency Review*

These identified standards may be found in the Appendix section of the *UTSA Department of Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual*.

Students will be asked to sign an individual acknowledgement form stating they have read, comprehend, and will adhere to the rules and standards set forth. The acknowledgement form will be provided to students during the New Student Orientation, all students must submit the form to the Social Work Office within two weeks of orientation. The form is kept as part of each student's Departmental academic file. Students who do not submit the form will have a registration hold placed until the form is submitted.

Additionally, students are also responsible for familiarizing themselves with and adhering to policies and procedures in the following documents:

- The University of Texas System Rules and Regulations
- *UTSA Graduate Catalog*
- *UTSA Student Policies*

2.0 Criteria For Evaluating Academic (Scholastic And Professional) Performance in the UTSA Department of Social Work MSW Program

Meeting the criteria for scholastic achievement is necessary but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in the Program. Both professional behavior and scholastic performance comprise academic standards. All MSW graduate students are expected to meet and comply with social work academic standards that include both scholastic and professional performance expectations. This includes, and is not limited to, demonstration of meeting competencies that reflect Department's mission, goals and objectives in the field practicum and classroom environments as well as maintaining good academic/scholastic standing as defined by *UTSA Student Policies*. In addition, MSW students are expected to meet the following six core standards that relate to a student's fitness to practice social work: (For summary, see *Fitness to Practice Competency Review*)

3.0 Communication Skills

- Expresses own feelings effectively and appropriately to the setting
- Acknowledges feelings of others
- Shows reasonable effort to adjust behaviors in response to changes in professional and interpersonal contexts
- Expresses tolerance of change in programmatic, academic, clinical or supervisory settings
- Thoughtful and reflective in response
- Appropriately participates and compromises in cooperative activities
- Acts professionally while experiencing difficult emotions
- Communicates respectfully and effectively with people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds
- Demonstrates professionalism in written, oral and electronic communication
 - Written. Writes effectively, uses correct grammar and spelling, and adheres to the American Psychological Association (APA) style in academic writing.
 - Oral. Communicates effectively and demonstrates culturally competent practice standards including a commitment to compassion, empathy, respect, and integrity when communicating with others. Expresses ideas and feelings in an effective and responsible manner.
 - Electronic. Regularly checks and responds to official e-mail from University faculty, administrators, and staff.

(Code: 1.05, 1.12, and 2.01; CC: 4 and 9)

4.0 Interpersonal and Professional Relationship Skills

- Avoids blaming others and examines own role in problems
- Respectful toward peers, supervisors, and/or instructors
- Actively examines and acknowledges own role in conflict
- Actively participates in problem-solving efforts
- Appropriately expresses emotions when conflicts are addressed
- Addresses conflict directly with individuals involved (CC: 4)

5.0 Critical Thinking Skills and Openness to Learning

- Open to new ideas
- Responsive, open and receptive to feedback and supervision
- Appropriately incorporates feedback to enhance professional development

- Demonstrates ability to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and field practice settings (*Code: 1.04, 4.01, 5.02, & 6.01; CC: 3*)

6.0 Self-Awareness

- Applies appropriate stress management strategies to keep stress from interfering with performance and/or learning
 - Exercises reason and judgment consistent with professional ability to deal with stressful situations, demanding expectations, and unexpected situations.
 - Possesses the awareness to seek assistance from internal and external support resources, such as cohorts, peers and others. Additional professional resources might also be necessary to appropriately manage stress in order to assure the best interest of clients being served by students during their field practice experiences.
- Accepts own mistakes and responds to them as opportunity for self-improvement
- Recognizes how own words and actions impact others
- Accurate and honest in describing own and others' roles in problems
- Openly discusses, respects and considers perspectives other than own
- Recognizes and effectively obtains assistance and/or utilizes support and resources available for emotional, physical or mental needs that are negatively impacting academic (scholastic and professional) progress, including, but not limited to:
 - A significant decline in academic performance including professional performance
 - An inability to use professional judgment
 - An inability to fulfill the ethical and professional *NASW Code of Ethics, Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Ethics and Professional Standards of Practice*, and *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*
 - Evidence of alcohol abuse and/or abuse of other substances
 - An inability to reflect a professional manner in appearance, dress, and general demeanor.

(*Code: 2.09, 4.03, and 4.05*)

7.0 Work Habits and Behaviors

- Dependable in meeting obligations
- Satisfactorily meets attendance requirements and notifies others in advance regarding absences
- Arrives on-time for scheduled obligations

- Meets deadlines, prioritizes responsibilities and satisfactorily completes paperwork/assignments
- Demonstrates a positive attitude
- Responsive, respectful, adaptable, and cooperative
- Exhibits appearance, dress and demeanor appropriate to the roles and settings
- Exhibits behaviors in the classroom, field, use of technology (including email, social media, etc.), and community environments that are in compliance with Program and institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws.
- Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placement with or without accommodations. (See UTSA Office of Disability Services for more information).

(CC: 4)

8.0 Ethics

- Maintains clear, appropriate and culturally-sensitive boundaries with clients, faculty, supervisors and peers
 - Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
 - Prevents one's private conduct from interfering with the ability to execute all professional responsibilities.
 - Maintains confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and field placement.
- Demonstrates awareness of personal values and does not impose personal values on others
 - Exhibits a sound understanding of self-awareness: the knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships; recognizing one's strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice
 - Conducts systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way.
 - Suspends personal biases during interactions with others.
- Demonstrates honesty and integrity in work, documentation and scholarship
 - Including but not limited to truthful about background, experiences,

and qualifications; accurate and truthful professional documentation such as field time sheets, case notes, etc.; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.

- Exhibits a strong commitment to the mission, goals, and core values of the Department of Social Work
 - Strives toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.
 - Appreciates the value of diversity. Provides the appropriate services to all those in need of assistance, regardless of a person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system.
- Follows applicable professional social work ethical codes and laws
 - Current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in *NASW Code of Ethics*, *Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Ethics*, and *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*, which include and not limited to:

(Code: 1.01, 1.05, 1.09, 1.06, 1.10, 1.07, 1.11, 2.07, 2.08, 4.08, 5.01, and 5.0; CC:1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 10)

9.0 Scholastic Performance

Students enrolled in the UTSA MSW program must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA to remain in academic good standing. Anytime a student earns a "C" or a grade of incomplete in a course, a review will be conducted with the Graduate Advisor of Record. Courses in which students earn grades of less than "C" (below 2.0 on a 4.0 scale) will not be applied to the MSW graduate degree. See *UTSA Graduate Catalog* and *Information Bulletin* for more information regarding this policy.

Generalist and specialized field practicum courses will be graded on a letter grade basis. The student must obtain a "B" (84%) level of performance or better in order to obtain credit.

Sources of Information for Academic Performance Criteria

Information about students meeting academic performance criteria in the Department of Social Work may include but is not limited to any of the following:

- Feedback or reference letters from faculty, work supervisors, or supervisors of volunteer human service activity or other field experiences
- Feedback from agency-based field instructors
- Observation of classroom, volunteer, or field behaviors

- Field Practicum Final Evaluation
- Feedback from the Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form
- Performance in oral and written assignments, examinations, or other appropriate coursework
- Student personal statements or self-assessments
- Interviews with faculty or other professionals
- Taped interview situations (audio or video)
- Feedback from students, staff, university (UTSA or other colleges and universities), helping professionals, or community
- Feedback from faculty in other social work programs that student may have attended
- Signed statements to adhere to *UTSA Department of Social Work Handbook and Field Manual*, *UTSA Department of Social Work Student Standards*, *NASW Code of Ethics*, *NASW Standards for Cultural Competence in Social Work Practice*, *Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Ethics*, *Council on Social Work Education Accreditation Standards*, or other contracts between the Program and the student.

10.0 Policies And Procedures For Review Of Academic (Scholastic and Professional) Performance

Faculty, field faculty, administrators, field instructors, and liaisons will evaluate graduate social work students according to the standards outlined in this document in a variety of settings, which include and are not limited to: classroom, advising, and field practicum settings, as well as formal and informal conversations. The Department of Social Work will use three levels of review to address a student's academic (scholastic and professional) performance. The level of review will coincide with the severity of the concern, which is outlined in section 3.2 below.

All information discussed during these review meetings among students, faculty, and administrators will be kept confidential unless the shared information raises concerns about professional performance. Faculty members and Program mentors will exchange information in an effort to identify a pattern of problems or concerns with a student in order to attempt to resolve issues with a student. This policy will also follow University procedures.

10.1 Performance that May Result in a Review and/or Possible Dismissal from the Department of Social Work

Circumstances which can lead to a student review include:

- Failure of a student to maintain good academic standing
- Scholastic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give

unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts

- Behavior which is determined to violate the NASW Code of Ethics
- A pattern of unprofessional behavior during instruction time or while in field practicum placement
- Committing a crime which violates societal laws and/or professional social work standards at any point after being admitted as a student to the UTSA MSW Program or a serious crime prior to becoming a student that is not known by the Department until after the student enters the Program
- A threat to hurt oneself or anyone else
- Inconsistent or little to no demonstration of adherence to the standards outlined in this document, including the additional policy documents referenced in this document.

10.2 The Three Levels of Student Review Early Intervention

When possible, faculty, instructors and field instructors are encouraged to dialogue with students in person or through email at the first sign of any possible unprofessional behavior or academic concerns. This conversation will serve the purpose of notifying the student of the potential concerns and providing guidance for improvement or possible corrections. The faculty member, instructor or field instructor will document the conversation and maintain a copy of the record.

Level 1.

This level of review includes the student and a faculty member. When a faculty member has academic concerns about possible unprofessional behavior or scholastic performance of a student, then the faculty member will do the following:

- Contact the student for a meeting to discuss the concerns and attempt to resolve the issue
- Document the content of the meetings with the student, utilizing the *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form*.
- Relay information of the concerns, plan of resolution, and outcome to the student's program mentor and Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) so the information and *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form* will be placed in the student's file.

If concerns arise during the student's field practicum, then the agency field instructor will discuss the concern(s) with the field liaison. The agency field instructor and the field liaison will decide who will discuss the concern(s) with the student. The *Fitness to Practice Evaluation* form will be utilized to document the conversation. The field liaison will communicate the information to the Office of Field Education, and the Field Office will submit a copy of the *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form* to the GAR so these concerns can be documented in the student's file. Most concerns can be resolved during this type of student review.

Level 2.

This level of review will occur if a student's behavior persists, there is a lack of academic progress, a student goes through more than one Level I review related to similar concerns or a student fails to receive a passing grade in any field practicum course. The faculty member and the student's Program mentor, and/or Graduate Advisor of Record (GAR) in cases where there is a conflict of interest, will do the following:

- Contact the student and hold a joint meeting with the student to discuss the concern(s)
- The GAR will gather information and develop a corrective plan if necessary with the student
- The student might be asked to modify behavior or to seek further assistance, including professional assessment and intervention, if appropriate, to address the behavior
- The GAR will document the content of the meeting along with the plan, utilizing the *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form* or another performance improvement plan and the form will be placed in the student's file

If more severe concerns arise or the behavior persists while the student is completing the field practicum, then the agency field instructor and the field liaison, under the guidance of the Director of Field Education, will meet with the student to discuss and address the concern(s). The Field Director will document the content of the meeting along with the plan, utilizing the *Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form* or another performance improvement plan and a copy of the form will be forwarded to the GAR to be placed in the student's file. The Director of Field Education will also consult with the Chair of the Social Work Department to determine if the circumstance warrants further review.

Level 3.

This type of review occurs when the previous reviews have not been effective at resolving the student's issues, or if concerns have been raised about a student's conduct that are serious enough to justify disciplinary action or possible dismissal from the UTSA MSW Program. This review will include the Chair of the Social Work Department and other faculty as deemed appropriate.

During this type of review the Chair of the Social Work Department will do the following:

- Inform the student in writing with advance notice of a date and time for a review meeting
- Conduct a meeting with the student, faculty member, GAR, Field Director, field liaison or other faculty member who has direct experience with the student. The student's mentor will also accompany them to the review, and the student is encouraged to meet with their faculty mentor prior to the review to receive information and clarification on the review process. The student will also have the option to choose a different social work faculty member to serve in the mentor role if needed.

- Determine the issue and ensure that the student fully understands the severity of the matter
- Facilitate the identification of alternate solutions

After this meeting, the Chair of the Social Work Department will have ten working days to inform the student in writing about the final recommendation. The recommendation may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Continuation in the Social Work Program without conditions.
- Continuation in the Social Work Program with conditions. If this is the case the student will meet with the Chair of the Social Work Department again to fully understand the conditions and sign a statement of agreement. This agreement will be placed in the student's file and monitored by Chair, GAR, and faculty.
- The student will be recommended to the Graduate School for dismissal from the Department of Social Work Program.

The student has the right to appeal the decision to the Dean's Office of the College for Health, Community and Policy within ten calendar days of the date the decision is emailed to the student, following UTSA grievance and appeal procedures.



College of Health, Community and Policy
Department of Social Work

Fitness to Practice Competency Review

All standards are evaluated based on student performance in programmatic, academic, clinical, supervisory, and interpersonal contexts.

Competence Achieved	Competence Not Achieved
Core Standard 1: Communication	
1.a Expresses <i>own</i> feelings effectively and appropriately to the setting 1.b Acknowledges <i>others</i> feelings 1.c Shows reasonable effort to adjust behaviors in response to changes in professional and interpersonal contexts 1.d Expresses tolerance of change in programmatic, academic, clinical, or supervisory settings 1.e Thoughtful and reflective in response 1.f Appropriately participates and compromises in cooperative activities 1.g Acts professionally while experiencing difficult emotions 1.h Communicates respectfully and effectively with people from different ethnic, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds 1.i Demonstrates professionalism in written, oral, and electronic communication	1.a.1 Does not express <i>own</i> feelings appropriately 1.a.2 Acts out negative feelings (through negative behaviors) rather than articulating them 1.b.1 Does not recognize or acknowledge feelings of others. 1.c.1 Shows little or no effort in adjusting to behaviors in response to changes in professional and interpersonal contexts 1.d.1 Expresses intolerance of change in programmatic, academic, clinical, or supervisory settings 1.e.1 Reactionary and defensive in response 1.f.1 Shows little or no engagement or compromise in cooperative activities 1.g.1 Allows emotions to interfere with professional behavior 1.h.1 Demonstrates lack of respect or understanding in communication with people from different backgrounds 1.i.1 Displays lack of professionalism in written, oral, and electronic communication (including email correspondence)
Core Standard 2: Interpersonal/Professional Relationships	
2.a Avoids blaming others and examines own role in problems 2.b Respectful toward peers, supervisors, and/or instructors 2.c Actively examines and acknowledges own role in conflict 2.d Actively participates in problem-solving efforts 2.e Appropriately expresses emotions when conflicts are addressed 2.f Addresses conflict directly with individuals involved	2.a.1 Blames others for problems without self-examination 2.b.1 Disrespectful toward peers, supervisors, and/or instructors (e.g., monopolizes discussion, gossips, uses derogatory language) 2.c.1 Shows minimal willingness to examine own role in conflict 2.d.1 Shows minimal effort and/or ability at problem-solving 2.f.1 Does not address conflict directly with individuals involved and addresses with others instead
Core Standard 3: Critical Thinking/Openness to Learning	
3.a Open to new ideas 3.b Responsive, open, and receptive to feedback and supervision 3.c Appropriately incorporates feedback to enhance professional development 3.d Demonstrates ability to process information and apply it to appropriate situation in classroom and field practice	3.a.1 Dogmatic about own perspective and ideas 3.b.1 Responds to feedback with defensiveness, anger, and/or denial 3.c.1 Shows little or no evidence of incorporating feedback 3.d.1 Demonstrates an inability or unwillingness to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and field practice
Core Standard 4: Self-Awareness	
4.a Applies appropriate stress management strategies to keep stress from interfering with performance and/or learning 4.b Accepts own mistakes and responds to them as opportunity for self-improvement 4.c Recognizes how own words and actions impact others 4.d Accurate and honest in describing own and others roles in problems 4.e Openly discusses, respects and considers perspectives other than own 4.f Recognizes and effectively obtains assistance and/or utilizes support and resources available for emotional, physical, substance abuse or mental health needs that are negatively impacting academic or professional progress	4.a.1 Fails to recognize or address potential impairments due to stress, leading to significant negative impact on performance and/or learning 4.b.1 Refuses to admit mistakes or examine own contribution to problems 4.c.1 Fails to recognize or address how own words and actions impact others 4.d.1 Lies, minimizes, or embellishes truth to extricate self from problems 4.e.1 Unable/unwilling to consider or show respect for others' points of view 4.f.1 Fails to recognize or address potential impairments such as those related to emotional, physical, mental health or substance abuse needs, leading to significant negative impact on performance and/or learning
Core Standard 5: Work Habits and Behaviors	
5.a Dependable in meeting expectations and obligations 5.b Satisfactorily meets attendance requirements and notifies others in advance regarding absences 5.c Arrives on time for scheduled obligations 5.d Meets deadlines and satisfactorily completes paperwork 5.e Demonstrates a positive attitude 5.f Responsive, adaptable, and cooperative 5.g Exhibits appearance, dress and demeanor appropriate to roles and settings 5.h Exhibits behaviors in the classroom, field, use of technology and community environments that are in compliance with Program and institutional policies, professional ethical standards and societal laws 5.i Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and field with or without accommodations	5.a.1 Regularly fails to meet program expectations and obligations 5.b.1 Absent from scheduled program obligations (e.g., class, supervision, field site) and does not notify others in advance 5.c.1 Arrives late for scheduled obligations 5.d.1 Rarely meets deadlines (i.e., practicum and internship paperwork, timesheets, client notes, other classroom assignments) or paperwork is incomplete when submitted 5.e.1 Demonstrates a consistently negative attitude 5.f.1 Rigid, inflexible or divisive 5.g.1 Dresses/presents in a manner inappropriate/incongruent with setting 5.h.1 Engages in behaviors in the classroom, field, use of technology or community environments that violate Program and institutional policies, professional ethical standards or societal laws 5.i.1 Lacks sufficient motor or sensory abilities to attend and participate in class or field with or without accommodation
Core Standard 6: Ethics	
6.a Maintains appropriate and respectful boundaries with clients, faculty, supervisors, or peers 6.b Demonstrates awareness of personal values and does not impose personal values on others 6.c Follows applicable professional social work ethical codes and laws 6.d Demonstrates honesty and integrity in work, documentation and scholarship 6.e Exhibits a strong commitment to the mission, goals and core values of the Dept. of Social Work	6.a.1 Displays inappropriate or disrespectful boundaries with clients, faculty, supervisors, or peers 6.b.1 Does not demonstrate awareness of personal values or imposes personal values on others 6.c.1 Breaches applicable professional social work ethical codes and laws 6.d.1 Commits plagiarism, falsifies or misrepresents information or otherwise demonstrates lack of honesty or integrity 6.e.1 Engages in behaviors contrary to the commitment of the mission, goals and core values of the Dept. of Social Work

*Further definition of standards can be found in the MSW Student Handbook and Field Manual



Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form
LEVEL OF REVIEW: 1 / 2 (circle one)

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____

Evaluator: _____ Date: _____

This is to notify you that your professional performance has been evaluated according to the Fitness to Practice Review Policy in the Student Handbook:

Core Standards	Almost Never	Sometimes	Almost Always
Appropriate Communication			
Appropriate Interpersonal/Professional Relationships			
Demonstrates critical thinking and openness to learning			
Demonstrates Self-Awareness			
Strong Work Habits and Behaviors			
Demonstrates Ethical Behavior			

Describe the specific behavior(s) indicating competence not achieved (attach additional documents if necessary)

What will happen next if behavior continues?

Signatures (acknowledges receipt and understanding of this evaluation):

Student: _____ Date: _____

Evaluating Faculty: _____ Date: _____

Others in attendance (Sign and state role): _____

College of Health, Community and Policy
Department of Social Work*Acknowledgment of Professional Standards*

Student Name: _____

Student ID: _____

All graduate Master of Social Work (MSW) students are personally responsible for reading, studying, and abiding by the following documents to educate themselves on social work professional standards as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and The Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners. This includes the following documents:

- CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
- NASW Code of Ethics
- Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Code of Conduct
- UTSA Department of Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual
- Fitness to Practice Evaluation Form and Competency Review

The above may be found in the Appendix section of the UTSA Department of Social Work Student Handbook and Field Manual, which is available on the department website. The Fitness to Practice Form is provided as part of your Orientation Packet.

All students must submit this acknowledgment form to the Social Work Office within Two weeks of orientation. The form is kept as part of each student's Departmental academic file. Students who do not submit the form will have a registration hold placed until the form is submitted. The Graduate Advisor of Record is available to discuss any questions that student may have regarding this process.

In signing this form, I acknowledge that I have read, comprehend, and will adhere to the rules and standards set forth in the documents and standards outlined above.

Signature:

Student Name_____
Date_____
Received by (faculty name):_____
Date



College of Health, Community and Policy
Department of Social Work

MSW Field Verification Form

Applicant Name

Semester of Application to Program

Final Field Evaluation Documents successful completion of MSW Field requirement. Comments:	Yes/No
Number of hours Applicant Completed in MSW field:	

Field Office

Date

Graduate Advisor of Record

Date

Selected UTSA Policies and Procedures

Additional information on student policies can be found here:

<https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/>

Emergency procedure: Be Aware, Be Safe

Safety

Students are expected to make sound choices and exercise caution in going to and from classes and work in agency settings or the community. A security guard can provide an escort to your vehicle if you call the UTSA Police Dispatcher at 458-4242 or utilize the Live Safe App. If students are worried about someone on a UTSA campus who is acting differently or concerned about their own safety, they should contact the UTSA Police Dispatcher at 458-4242. Occupants of buildings on UTSA campuses are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Be sure to familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and building. If you need assistance to evacuate, inform your instructor during the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building until you are given permission. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and adhere to policies and practices related to UTSA, agency and /or community safety. Students should notify the professor regarding any safety concerns.

SafeZone App (replaces LiveSafe)

Provides one-tap access to UTSAPD for emergencies and non-emergencies. Includes mental health crisis support, emergency alerts, and reporting. Available on the downtown and main campuses. Your location is only shared when you request help and sharing ends when the alert is cancelled. [Click here](#) for more details on downloading and FAQs.

If you encounter an emergency on or near the UTSA campuses, call one of these numbers:

911 (from a UTSA land line)

(210) 458-4911 (from a cell phone)

(210)-458-4242 Non-emergency line – should you desire an escort to your car after dark

These numbers are to the UTSA dispatcher, who will send an EMS unit (estimated average arrival time within 12 minutes) as well as a first responder (estimated arrival time within 4 minutes). The first responder will seek to stop bleeding, restore breathing and provide CPR (defibrillator) until EMS arrives. Additionally, police units are dispatched to the entrance of the campus to direct the EMS unit to the emergency situation.

Dialing 911 from a cell phone will route the call to the City of San Antonio and will dispatch EMS but may not activate a UTSA first responder nor dispatch UTSA police to the campus entrances. Additionally, consider adding the university emergency number to your cell phone as well as a phone number for next-of-kin designated "emergency contact." More information: consult the UTSA Emergency Response Guide here: <https://alerts.utsa.edu/utsa-community-emergency-response/>

General Academic Regulations

Academic Honesty

Ethical Standards

The University can best function and accomplish its objectives in an atmosphere of high ethical standards. All students are expected and encouraged to contribute to such an atmosphere in every way possible, especially by observing all accepted principles of academic honesty. It is recognized, however, that a large university will include a few students who do not understand, appreciate, or practice these principles. Consequently, alleged cases of academic dishonesty involving UTSA students will inevitably occur.

Academic or scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student, or the attempt to commit such acts. Academic dishonesty is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and is addressed in [Sec. 203](#) of the code of conduct.

Students are not at liberty to disregard previous college work attempted. All students transferring to UTSA *must list all* colleges attended on their UTSA application for admission. While enrolled at UTSA, students who attend other colleges are required to submit official academic transcripts to the Office of Admissions from every college attended at the end of the semester during which coursework was undertaken, even if coursework has been withdrawn. This includes concurrent enrollment while attending UTSA. Failure to do so may result in the rejection of the admission application, withdrawal of any offer of acceptance, cancellation of enrollment, permanent dismissal from UTSA, or other appropriate disciplinary action.

Incidences of academic or scholastic dishonesty are referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. For more information, please refer to the following website:

<https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/generalacademicregulations/academichonesty/>

Nondiscrimination

It is the policy of The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) to provide an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the UTSA community. In accordance with federal and state law, UTSA prohibits unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, citizenship, gender identity, gender expression, and veteran status in all aspects of employment and education.

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is also prohibited pursuant to this policy. Additional information can be found regarding the UTSA Office of Inclusive Excellence here:

<https://www.utsa.edu/inclusiveexcellence/>

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and Sexual Misconduct

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681) is a federal law that prohibits

discrimination based on gender in educational institutions which receive federal financial assistance. Title IX also prohibits sexual misconduct, which is any form of sexual violence, including harassment. University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) has defined various forms of sexual misconduct, which you may find at this website:

<https://catalog.utsa.edu/policies/administrativepoliciesandprocedures/nondiscriminationandsexualharassment/>

The University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) (the University) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act) of , which specifies procedures universities must follow to prevent and respond to sexual violence. Sexual misconduct, as defined in Section VII Definitions, will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action. UTSA offers many resources for students who have experienced sexual misconduct. For detailed information see the Peace Center website:

<https://www.utsa.edu/studentadvocacy/resources.html>

The University encourages students to promptly report violations of this Policy to the Title IX Coordinator or Deputy Coordinators (collectively “[EOS/Title IX Office](#)”) or a Responsible Employee. The full UTSA policy can be accessed in Section 9.24 of the Handbook of Operating Procedures: <http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter9/9-24.html>. Students should be aware that faculty and staff are required to report any disclosures of sexual misconduct to the Title IX Coordinator. Students can make a confidential report to counselors in Counseling and Psychological Services and health care providers in Health Care Services. These helping professionals are able to maintain confidentiality and only report the type of incident that occurred to the Title IX Coordinator, without revealing any information that would violate a student’s/employee’s expectation of privacy. Students can access a counselor at the UTSA Counseling Services Office: <https://www.utsa.edu/counsel/> or can see a healthcare provider at the Student Health Services clinic: <https://www.utsa.edu/health/>

Also, the Peace Center has a Victim Advocate on staff with whom students can also share confidential information: <https://www.utsa.edu/studentadvocacy/>

Students with Disabilities:

The University of Texas at San Antonio in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act provides “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities. Only those students who have officially registered with Student Disability Services, requested accommodations, and provided an official accommodation letter of notification for this course will be eligible for disability accommodations. Instructors at UTSA must be provided an official notification of accommodation through Student Disability Services. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.utsa.edu/disability/ or by calling Student Disability

Services at (210) 458-4157. Accommodations are not retroactive. Additional information regarding Student Disability Services can be found here: <http://www.utsa.edu/disability/> From the *UTSA Graduate Catalog, 2019-2021*

Department of Social Work

Master of Social Work

The Master of Social Work (MSW) degree prepares students for advanced social work practice. Graduates work in professional positions serving diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students graduating from the program will demonstrate a commitment to cultural competence, multidimensional contextual practice, social responsibility, and transformative social work. The UTSA MSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Applicants with misdemeanor or felony charges or convictions may have difficulty being accepted by an agency to complete their field practicum, obtaining a social work license, and/or gaining employment as a social worker in some settings. See the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners Web site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork/> for additional information.

The Master of Social Work degree program consists of two program tracks: a 60-semester-credit-hour program for students with undergraduate degrees that are not in social work, and a 36-semester-credit-hour program for students with undergraduate degrees in social work or at least 24 hours of graduate credit in social work.

- 36-hour program: Applicants for this program must have a bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) awarded from a CSWE-accredited program or have successfully completed a minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours in a CSWE-accredited MSW program. The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree, exclusive of coursework or other study required to remove deficiencies or to complete additional degree requirements not transferred, is 36 graduate credit hours.
- 60-hour program: Applicants for this program must have a bachelor's degree. The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree, exclusive of coursework or other study required to remove deficiencies, is 60 graduate credit hours.

The 36-hour program is available only to students who have earned a BSW degree or successfully completed a minimum of 24 graduate semester hours from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Program Admission Requirements

Applicants must satisfy University-wide graduate admission requirements. Admission requirements for all students include:

1. A completed UTSA Graduate School application
2. Official transcripts from all colleges and universities attended;
3. An application packet found on the Graduate School's website with instructions and required forms that includes the following:
 - a. A narrative statement addressing interest in and the fit with the

UTSA MSW program not to exceed 1,250 words (approximately five pages). Statement must address required questions provided in the narrative statement guidelines

- b. Three completed department recommendation forms from professionals familiar with applicant preparation for graduate social work education
 - c. Department forms documenting prior professional and volunteer experiences and academic preparation in the liberal arts
4. For international students, results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL; not more than five years old and a score of not less than 60 on the paper version, 79 on the internet version), or results of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS; not more than five years old and a score of not less than 6.5)

36-Hour Program

The 36-hour program is designed for applicants who have graduated with a bachelor's degree in social work (BSW) from a CSWE-accredited program or have successfully completed a minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours in CSWE-accredited Master of Social Work program. The minimum number of semester credit hours required for this MSW program track is 36 semester credit hours. Course deficiencies and required UTSA courses for the degree not completed elsewhere, if a transfer student, may require additional coursework.

36-Hour Program Admission Requirements

In addition to University-wide requirements and program admission requirements, applicants must have completed a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program within 5 years from the date of application or have successfully completed a minimum of 24 graduate semester credit hours in a CSWE-accredited Master of Social Work program. The time limit will extend up to 10 years for BSW graduates with a current social work license and with post BSW practice experience.

For admission to the 36-hour program, additional requirements include:

- A grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 semester credit hours of coursework for the BSW, as well as any graduate-level MSW coursework previously completed
- A reference letter from either the BSW field director/coordinator or BSW program director if a BSW applicant, or from the MSW program director/chair if an applicant has completed MSW courses, attesting to good standing status in the CSWE-accredited social work program where the student has completed coursework;

- BSW applicants must provide a copy of the BSW field evaluation form which indicates number of clock hours completed, final grade, description of practicum setting (including community and clientele served), and accomplishments as a practicum student
- MSW applicants who have completed any portion of their foundation field practicum in another program must provide a copy of the MSW field evaluation form which indicates number of clock hours completed, final grade, description of practicum setting (including community and clientele served), and accomplishments as a practicum student
- Be in good standing at the last institution attended
- Be recommended for admission by the UTSA Department of Social Work Graduate Program Committee

60-Hour Social Work Program

The 60-hour social work program is designed for applicants who have undergraduate degrees in something other than social work. Non-BSW students must complete 24 semester credit hours of generalist courses and 36 hours of additional specialized coursework in the MSW program. The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the 60-hour program track is 60 semester credit hours. Course deficiencies may require additional coursework.

60-Hour Program Admission Requirements

In addition to University-wide requirements and program admission requirements, applicants must have completed an undergraduate degree in something other than social work.

For admission to the 60-hour program, additional requirements include:

- A cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) in the last 60 semester credit hours of undergraduate and graduate-level coursework graduate-level coursework previously completed
- Be in good standing at the last institution attended
- Be recommended for admission by the UTSA Department of Social Work Graduate Program Committee

Classification and Academic Standing Requirements

Students with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) under 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale) may apply for probationary admission status by directly addressing GPA as part of their narrative statement. Students admitted as conditional or probationary students must satisfy specified conditions their first semester in the program for their admission status to be changed to that of an unconditional student. Admission as a special graduate student does not guarantee subsequent admission as a degree-seeking student; such students must reapply for degree-seeking status.

Please refer to department [website](#) for further information.

Degree Requirements

36-Hour Program

The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree, exclusive of coursework or other study required to remove deficiencies, is 36 for the BSW (advanced standing) student, and 36 for the modified MSW degree option for transfer students from CSWE-accredited graduate social work programs.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
A. 6 semester credit hours of courses particular to program mission and goals. All students must complete the following courses:		6
SWK 5233	Global Context of Social Work	
SWK 5513	Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations	
B. 18 semester credit hours in Specialized Culturally Competent Practice. All students must complete the following courses:		18
SWK 5423	Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar	
SWK 5433	Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar	
SWK 5443	Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals	
SWK 5463	Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups	
SWK 5493	Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice	
SWK 5523	Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families	
C. 6 semester credit hours in Specialized Research and Policy. All students must complete the following courses:		6
SWK 5243	Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation	
SWK 5473	Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy	
D. 3 semester credit hours from the following selectives. All students must complete one of the following courses:		3
SWK 5483	Multidimensional Assessment	
SWK 5633	Transformational Leadership in Social Work	
E. 3 semester credit hours of additional electives. All students must complete the following:		3
SWK6973	OR 3 semester credit hours of open elective graduate coursework chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor of record.	
Total Credit Hours:		36

60-Hour Social Work Program

The minimum number of semester credit hours required for the degree, exclusive of coursework or other study required to remove deficiencies, is 60 for the non-BSW student. Academic course credit cannot be granted for life or previous work experience.

Code	Title	Credit Hours
A. 24 semester credit hours of generalist courses. Non-BSW students must complete the following courses:		24
SWK 5013	Human Behavior and Social Environment: Dynamics of Individuals and Families	
SWK 5103	Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis	
SWK 5113	Generalist Social Work Practice	
SWK 5203	Social Work Research	
SWK 5303	Foundations of Social Work I	
SWK 5313	Foundations of Social Work II	
SWK 5403	Generalist Field Practicum I and Integrative Seminar	
SWK 5413	Generalist Field Practicum II and Integrative Seminar	
B. 6 semester credit hours of courses particular to program mission and goals. All students must complete the following courses:		6
SWK 5233	Global Context of Social Work	
SWK 5513	Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations	
C. 18 semester credit hours in Specialized Culturally Competent Practice. All students must complete the following courses:		18
SWK 5423	Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar	
SWK 5433	Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar	
SWK 5443	Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals	
SWK 5463	Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups	
SWK 5493	Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice	
SWK 5523	Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families	
D. 6 semester credit hours in Specialized Research and Policy. All students must complete the following courses:		6
SWK 5243	Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation	
SWK 5473	Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy	
E. 3 semester credit hours from the following selectives. All students must complete one of the following courses:		3
SWK 5483	Multidimensional Assessment	

SWK 5633	Transformational Leadership in Social Work	
	E. 3 semester credit hours of additional electives. All students must complete the following:	
SWK6973	OR 3 semester credit hours of open elective graduate coursework chosen in consultation with the graduate advisor of record.	3
	Total Credit Hours	60

Comprehensive Examination

Students who successfully complete [SWK 5433](#) Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar with a grade of “B” or better satisfy the comprehensive examination requirement for master’s degree graduates. (Students must earn a minimum grade of “B” in [SWK 5433](#) as a degree requirement.)

Field Practicum

Students in the 60-semester-credit-hour program are expected to complete 900 clock hours of field experience under the supervision of an MSW social worker while in the program. Students complete a minimum of 450 clock hours over two semesters as part of their generalist coursework and an additional 450 clock hours over one or two semesters as part of their specialized coursework. Advanced standing students complete 450 clock hours of field practicum as part of their advanced coursework - advanced standing students with fewer than 450 field clock hours from their BSW programs may need to complete additional field hours for a total of 900 field clock hours (combined BSW and MSW). The program’s field office arranges the placement and oversees the placement process. Although a limited number of placements are available for students who work full-time, students are expected to be as flexible as possible to ensure successful placement. Placement cannot be guaranteed exclusively during evening and weekend hours.

Department of Social Work (SWK) MSW Courses

SWK 5013 Human Behavior and Social Environment: Dynamics of Individuals and Families (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This generalist course focuses on building students' understanding of individual and family life span development with an emphasis on diversity and social justice issues. Ecological systems and cross-cultural development provide the organizing framework for this course. Attention is given to increasing students' understanding of individual and family dynamics by developing

their abilities to understand, evaluate, and differentially apply multiple paradigms and theories. Emphasis is placed on the social construction of knowledge of human development. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5103. Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy Analysis. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This generalist course examines the overall structure of the American social welfare system from a historical multidimensional contextual perspective that emphasizes the diversity of clients/client systems, problems, needs, and injustices. It also considers the parallel historical development of the profession of social work, including the ways it has responded to the demands of social problems across key periods of the American social welfare experience. An emphasis is placed on policy analysis as a foundation for advocacy on behalf of clients/client systems. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5113. Generalist Social Work Practice. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This course is taken the semester before students enter their first semester generalist field practicum. It focuses on the development of beginning knowledge, skills, and values needed to practice generalist social work within a community context. The course socializes students to the social work profession, with emphasis on the ecosystems perspective as an organizing framework for understanding clients/client systems and the strengths and empowerment perspectives. Professional values and the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics are introduced, as well as the importance of self- reflection that incorporates an understanding of one's own personal values. Attention is given to practice skills applicable in work with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, with emphasis on beginning relationship skills in engagement and assessment. Students will apply knowledge and skills learned by working in task groups to conduct an assessment of a neighborhood or community. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF \$60.

SWK 5203. Social Work Research. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This generalist research course explores the role of research in culturally competent social work practice that

emphasizes the diversity of clients/client systems, strengths, problems, needs and injustices. The course focuses on research methods and the use of ethical scientific methods used by social workers for evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5233. Global Context of Social Work. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist social work courses or consent of graduate advisor. This course, particular to the mission of the UTSA Department of Social Work, examines the historical, political, and cultural contexts of contemporary global social issues and the mutually reinforcing relationship between the local and the global. The course critically examines the economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions of globalization and the upheavals they produce for nations and people. Specific models of intervention and select approaches to social development seen as more compatible with social work's commitment to social justice are examined to determine their respective strengths and weaknesses in response to contemporary social issues. In addition, the course raises critical questions about social work's past and present ability to address the growing challenges of an increasingly complex integrated and interdependent world. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5243. Specialized Social Work Research: Practice and Program Evaluation.

(3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist courses. This specialized research course prepares students to integrate research methods in the assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation of practice/program effectiveness. Attention is given to the conduct, ethics, and application of research and evaluation principles when addressing social and economic justice issues with clients/client systems. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5303. Foundations of Social Work I. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of [SWK 5013](#), [SWK 5103](#), and [SWK 5113](#) and concurrent enrollment in [SWK 5403](#). This generalist course is the second course in a three-course sequence that focuses on the development of knowledge, skills, and values needed to practice generalist social work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The course is taken concurrently with [SWK 5403](#) Generalist Field Practicum I and Integrative Seminar. This course incorporates ecosystems, strengths and empowerment perspectives, focusing on knowledge and skills needed to facilitate generalist practice with diverse clients/client systems, with an emphasis on engagement, assessment, evaluation, problem formulation, and contracting. Students apply concepts and skills learned in this course in work with clients/client systems in their field practicum setting. Specific attention is given to understanding human service agencies within a community and diversity context and planning a client group Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5313. Foundations of Social Work II. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing in social work, completion of [SWK 5303](#) and [SWK 5403](#), and

concurrent enrollment in [SWK 5413](#). This generalist course is the third course in a three-course sequence that focuses on the development of knowledge, skills, and values needed to practice generalist social work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Building upon the ecological systems, strengths, and empowerment perspectives, the course focuses on knowledge and skills needed to facilitate work with diverse clients/client systems, with an emphasis on middle and end stages of the helping process. Specific attention is given to evaluating practice, planning and implementing an organizational or community change effort, and facilitating a client group. Students apply concepts and skills learned in this course in work with clients/client systems in their field practicum settings. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5403. Generalist Field Practicum I and Integrative Seminar. (2-8) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of [SWK 5013](#), [SWK 5103](#), and [SWK 5113](#), and concurrent enrollment in [SWK 5303](#). This generalist field practicum course is designed to serve as the integration of professional knowledge, values, and skills in real-world practice. It is a practice course based on supervised assignments designed to facilitate the student's ability to develop and demonstrate independent learning competencies from a generalist social work perspective which includes skill in working with individuals, families, small groups, communities, and organizations. The student completes a minimum of 225 clock hours at an assigned field practicum site affiliated with UTSA. The student will continue in this same practicum setting for [SWK 5413](#). An integrative seminar that emphasizes integration of theory and practice meets weekly. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B" in both the field and the integrative seminar components to pass this course; the field practicum and the integrative seminar each contribute 50 percent toward the final grade. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5413. Generalist Field Practicum II and Integrative Seminar. (2-8) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of [SWK 5303](#) and [SWK 5403](#), and concurrent enrollment in [SWK 5313](#). This generalist field practicum course builds on knowledge and skills gained in [SWK 5403](#), with a focus on demonstrating competencies from a generalist social work perspective and skill development with diverse clients/client systems. The student's assignment from [SWK 5403](#) continues at the same setting. The student completes a minimum of 225 clock hours. An integrative seminar that emphasizes integration of theory and practice meets weekly. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B" in both the field and the integrative seminar components to pass this course; the field practicum and the integrative seminar each contribute 50 percent toward the final grade. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5423. Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar. (2-8) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist coursework and the majority of specialized courses. Building on generalist or BSW field experiences, this specialized field practicum course provides a supervised practicum at an assigned practicum site and a weekly integrative seminar, with an emphasis on specialized culturally competent practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The minimum 225-clock-hour internship addresses the continued independent learning and application of theory to culturally competent practice at the

specialized curriculum level. The internship may be designed as a block with all hours completed in one semester (450 clock hours) when taken concurrently with [SWK 5433](#) Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar. The integrative seminar is designed to integrate classroom theory and real-world practice. It also serves as the bridge between program goals and specialized competencies. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B" in both the field and the integrative seminar components to pass this course; the field practicum and the integrative seminar each contribute 50 percent toward the final grade. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5433. Specialized Field Practicum IV and Integrative Seminar. (2-8) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist coursework and all specialized courses other than those taken concurrently with [SWK 5433](#). Taken during the student's last semester in the MSW Program, this course serves as the capstone course for the social work program. Building on field experiences in [SWK 5423](#), this course provides a continuation of a supervised practicum at the same assigned practicum site as in [SWK 5423](#) as well as a weekly integrative seminar. The minimum 225-clock-hour internship addresses the continued independent learning and application of theory to culturally competent practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities at the specialized curriculum level. The internship can be designed as a block of one semester (450 clock hours) when taken concurrently with [SWK 5423](#) Specialized Field Practicum III and Integrative Seminar. The integrative seminar is designed to integrate classroom theory and real world culturally competent practice. It also serves as the bridge between program goals and specialized competencies. Students demonstrate program competency mastery through completion of an independent capstone course paper. Students must earn a minimum grade of "B" in both the field and the integrative seminar components to pass this course; the field practicum and the integrative seminar each contribute 50 percent toward the final grade. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5443. Specialized Social Work Methods: Individuals. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of all generalist courses; concurrent enrollment in [SWK 5423](#) is recommended. This specialized practice methods course covers the differential application of contemporary practice paradigms, theories, and approaches in relation to multidimensional contextual practice with individuals. The aim of this course is to develop students' practice knowledge, skills, and capacity for autonomous culturally competent practice. Using this framework, students develop knowledge and skills in the differential selection, adaptation, application, and evaluation of select practice strategies and techniques for working with diverse individuals who are experiencing problems, needs, and injustices of varying onset, magnitude, and duration. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5463. Specialized Social Work Methods: Groups. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist courses. This specialized practice methods course covers the differential application of contemporary practice paradigms, theories, and approaches in relation to multidimensional contextual practice with groups. The aim of this course is to develop students' practice knowledge, skills, and capacity for autonomous culturally competent

practice. Using this multidimensional contextual framework, students develop knowledge and skills in the differential selection, adaptation, application, and evaluation of select practice strategies and techniques for working in groups with diverse individuals across the life span. The course emphasizes the ways that setting, age, diversity, and problems inform the differential selection of group type and format, membership, time limits, and practice approaches. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5473. Specialized Social Work Methods: Policy Practice and Advocacy.

(3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist courses or consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This specialized course in social welfare policy is for students who have already achieved a basic understanding of the history, mission, and philosophy of the profession and the historical and contemporary patterns of service provision. The course focuses on the knowledge, values, and skills needed to be an effective social welfare policy advocate. Students develop and analyze alternative strategies for culturally competent social welfare policy advocacy, incorporating a multidimensional contextual perspective with a focus on social justice, diversity and underserved populations. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5483. Multidimensional Assessment. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of all generalist courses, or consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This specialized selective course on the multidimensional assessment of the functioning of children, adolescents, and adults gives emphasis to students learning to critically evaluate and adapt assessment approaches and methods that are congruent with the cultural experiences of clients. The multidimensional framework incorporates biological, genetic, physical, developmental, social, cultural, and environmental factors, and social justice issues in the assessment process. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5493. Specialized Social Work Methods: Community Practice. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist courses. This course in specialized community practice is for students who have already achieved a general understanding of the structure and dynamics of organizations and communities. The course focuses on the knowledge, values, and skills needed to engage in effective community practice, incorporating a multidimensional contextual perspective with a focus on social justice, diversity, and underserved populations. The course incorporates content on organizations within a community practice context. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5513. Culturally Competent Practice with Diverse Populations. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Graduate standing and consent of graduate advisor; must be completed prior to enrollment in the generalist field practicum. Advanced standing and transfer students complete this course during their first semester in the program. This course examines the dynamics of diversity and social justice and their relationships to social work practice with diverse and oppressed populations. Critical self-reflection about one's own intersecting cultural identities

and the impact on discourse and work with others is emphasized. Frameworks for understanding populations served by social workers, incorporating strengths, resiliency, oppression and discrimination are also explored. The course incorporates ethnographic perspectives in working with clients/client systems. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5523. Specialized Social Work Methods: Children and Families. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisite: Completion of all generalist courses. This specialized practice methods course covers the differential application of contemporary practice paradigms, theories, and approaches in relation to multidimensional contextual practice with children and families. The course examines pertinent ethical issues, varying approaches used in contemporary social work intervention, and current research in working with children and families. Factors leading to family systems change, goal setting, intervention applicability, the structure of the intervention process, the social worker's role, and techniques of couples/family interventions and interventions in working with children and adolescents are incorporated in this course. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 5633. Transformational Leadership in Social Work. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Completion of all generalist courses or consent of graduate advisor. This course focuses on the social responsibility of social workers who have specialized in cultural competence to serve as transformational leaders as they collaborate across disciplines within an interprofessional context in order to better serve families and communities. The course introduces students to transformational models of leadership, with an emphasis on the specialized knowledge and skills needed for effective culturally competent practice in human service organizational settings. The course incorporates coverage of management theory and organizational management functions, including providing leadership for a diverse workforce. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 6951. Independent Study. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing, successful completion of 6 semester credit hours of social work graduate courses, and permission in writing (form available) from the instructor, graduate advisor, and department chair. Independent course of study in a special topic of interest in the areas of research, field practicum, or other social work related topic under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular social work course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but no more than 6 hours will apply to the Master's degree. Course Fee: STSP \$3; SWF1 \$20.

SWK 6952. Independent Study. (0-0) 2 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing, successful completion of 6 semester credit hours of social work graduate courses, and permission in writing (form available) from the instructor, graduate advisor, and department chair. Independent course of study in a special topic of interest in the areas of research, field practicum, or other social work related topic under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular

social work course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but no more than 6 hours will apply to the Master's degree. Course Fee: STSP \$6.

SWK 6953. Independent Study. (0-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing, successful completion of 6 semester credit hours of social work graduate courses, and permission in writing (form available) from the instructor, graduate advisor, and department chair. Independent course of study in a special topic of interest in the areas of research, field practicum, or other social work related topic under the direction of a faculty member. For students needing specialized work not usually available as part of the regular social work course offerings. May be repeated for credit, but no more than 6 hours will apply to the Master's degree. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.

SWK 6961. Comprehensive Examination. (0-0) 1 Credit Hour.

Prerequisite: Approval of the appropriate Graduate Program Committee Chair to take the Comprehensive Examination. Independent study course for the purpose of taking the Comprehensive Examination. May be repeated as many times as approved by the Graduate Program Committee. Enrollment is required each term in which the examination is taken if no other courses are being taken that term. The grade report for the course is either "CR" (satisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination) or "NC" (unsatisfactory performance on the Comprehensive Examination). Course Fee: STSP \$3.

SWK 6973. Special Topics in Culturally Competent Practice. (3-0) 3 Credit Hours.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing and consent of instructor or graduate advisor. This is an organized course offering the opportunity for specialized study in culturally competent practice not usually available as part of the regular course offerings. Special Topics courses may be repeated for credit when topics vary, but no more than 6 semester credit hours, regardless of discipline, will apply to the Master's degree. Course Fee: STSP \$9; SWF1 \$60.