



SCHOOL OF  
**SOCIAL  
WORK**

# **MSW Student Handbook**

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*Michigan State University*

*College of Social Science*

**MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

## MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK

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## 1. Introduction and Purpose of Handbook

This MSW Student Handbook provides information about the School of Social Work, the curriculum, and University policies that affect all members of the School's graduate student body. Any matriculated part-time or full-time student in the School's graduate programs (MSW or PhD) is a member of the School's graduate student body; and this includes students admitted to the School's fully accredited off-campus and Statewide Blended MSW programs.

Familiarity with the contents of this Handbook is crucial for successful completion of your degree program. It describes resources available to you, your responsibilities as a graduate student of Social Work at MSU, and academic policies and procedures at the School and University levels. This Manual describes how students can participate in the academic affairs of the School, and how special situations students encounter should be resolved.

The MSW Program Director and Graduate Advisors are responsible for assisting students with the procedures outlined in this Handbook; and the Associate Director and the Director of the School are also available.

Social workers have a profound impact on the lives of those they serve. Given that, successful social workers possess characteristics such as self-motivation, responsibility, diligence, conscientiousness, and innovation. We expect students to demonstrate possession of these qualities through their course work, field work, and interactions with faculty, staff and peers. Since problem-solving skills are also at the heart of social work, we strongly encourage students to think of possible actions and solutions to their situations and to be prepared to discuss them when meeting with faculty, staff and/or peers to address concerns.

Students should also become familiar with other documents that contain information about the University, the College of Social Science, and the School of Social Work. These documents include Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, General Student Regulations, and Academic Freedom for Students at Michigan State University. These are found in Spartan Life published by the Office of Student Services (<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu>). The MSU Graduate School (<http://grad.msu.edu>) outlines University academic standards and regulations governing graduate students.

## 2. Introduction to the University, College, and School

### 2.1. Michigan State University

Michigan State University (MSU) provides an excellent setting for social work education. MSU is a premier research-intensive, land-grant university where people matter. With its commitment to research, MSU creates and advances knowledge. As the nation's first land-grant university, MSU extends learning to actively serve Michigan, the nation and the international community. The East Lansing campus is rich in resources, very beautiful, and located near the State's capitol, giving our students extraordinary access to the policy debate and policy formation processes. The student population is active and diverse. With its close ties to communities through the extension

service and distance education programs, MSU makes a significant contribution to the State of Michigan. This supportive context gives the School of Social Work a special and valued role in the University and a broad network of connections to University administration and other departments. There are over 500 student organizations on the East Lansing campus that emphasize a broad range of interests and issues including racial/ethnic, gender and gender identity, religious, international, musical, academic interest area, political, social service, volunteer, professional organizations and professional fraternities and sororities, and recreational and athletic groups. Many groups sponsor social events, speakers, films, cultural, recreational and entertainment events. The cultures of many different nations are brought to campus through a variety of events and programs. This provides opportunities for students to improve cross-cultural communication skills and to learn about and experience cultures from different parts of the world, as well as the cultures of racial/ethnic, religious and sexual minorities. Also, MSU sends more students overseas than any other American university. As a Big Ten school, MSU competes in 12 men's varsity sports and 13 women's varsity sports, attracts national political and scientific speakers, and hosts world-class cultural entertainment. Michigan State University is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution. MSU operates in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

## 2.2. College of Social Science

The College of Social Science is the largest and among the most diverse at MSU; more than 6,300 undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled in its 14 major disciplines. Nearly 400 tenured and tenure-stream faculty provide instructional, research, and outreach services within its eight departments, three schools, and seven centers and institutes.

The School of Social Work is part of the College of Social Science, along with other professional programs in criminal justice, human resources and labor relations and industrial relations, and urban and regional planning. The College also houses the disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, global and area studies, history, human development and family studies, interdisciplinary studies in social science, political science, psychology, and sociology. It has four major research and outreach institutes: Center for Advanced Study of International Development (CASID), Center for Global Change and Earth Observations (CGCEO), Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR), Julian Samora Research Institute (JSRI) and The Center for Humane Arts, Letters, and Social Services Online (Matrix). In addition, the College offers special programs in applied developmental science, cognitive science and Chicano/Latino Studies.

All graduates of the School become alumni of the College of Social Science, as well as the School of Social Work. The School draws upon the resources of the College for research partnerships, outreach activities, joint appointments, and guest speakers.

### 2.3. School of Social Work

The School of Social Work includes students from many backgrounds in our academic programs at the baccalaureate, master, and doctoral levels. The School's educational programs are fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

We take great pride in our programs, our graduates, and in our students. The School provides students with the knowledge, skills, and value base needed to become effective members of the professional social work community. Our students receive the education and training necessary to become highly skilled social work practitioners who will enrich the lives of those they serve and the communities in which they practice. School alumni are found throughout the state of Michigan, the nation, and in several foreign countries. They are practitioners, administrators, educators, researchers, and social work leaders. The entire School - faculty, administrators, support staff, current students - are pleased that you have chosen our master's degree program. We look forward to getting to know you and working with you as you progress through your academic program.

#### Mission

We are dedicated to educating students for competent, responsive and ethical social work practice. Our teaching, research and outreach seek to promote positive change and social justice for diverse communities, families, and individuals.

#### Values

These values of the School of Social Work are enduring beliefs shared by the faculty and contribute to the character of the MSU School of Social Work. We aim to display these values through all aspects of our program and our interactions inside and outside of the University.

We are committed to **EXCELLENCE** in teaching, research and outreach.

We advance our work through respectful and responsive **COLLABORATION** inside and outside of the University.

We are committed to **SOCIAL JUSTICE** and positive social change.

We promote diversity, equity and **INCLUSION** with regard to our programs and partnerships.

We encourage high standards of professional **LEADERSHIP** and achievement by our faculty, students and graduates.

We foster and support **ACCESSIBILITY** to our educational programs, research and faculty resources.



## 2.4. Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Policy

The School of Social Work greatly values diversity and actively recruits persons of color, persons with special needs, women, and persons who have been disadvantaged. We encourage non-traditional students and work with them to achieve academic success.

The University's Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination policy reads as follows:

Michigan State University is committed to the principles of equal opportunity, non-discrimination and affirmative action. University programs, activities and facilities are available to all without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, political persuasion, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, height, weight, veteran status, age or familial status. The University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer. Additional information about this policy can be found at <http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/equalopportunity.htm>

Acts are prohibited under this policy if they (1) discriminate against any University community member(s) through inappropriate limitation of employment opportunity, access to University residential facilities, or participation in educational, athletic, social, cultural, or other University activities on the basis of age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status or weight, or (2) harass any University community member(s) on the basis of age, color, gender, gender identity, disability status, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, or weight.

## 3. Ethics

### 3.1. Expectations of Social Work Students

The School of Social Work conforms to the College of Social Science and University policies regarding students. The School's MSW Manual and the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the Michigan State University Student Handbook, and Spartan Life are available on the web. These documents describe student rights and responsibilities and should be read so that students understand the expectations placed upon them as well as their rights and obligations.

Since they are enrolled in a professional School, in addition to the University and College expectations, students must conform to the NASW Code of Ethics (<http://socialworkers.org/pubs/code/code.asp>) and to be especially sensitive to the impact of their actions on clients, social work agencies and those who make up the School community, including student colleagues, staff and faculty. This adherence to the Code of Ethics is one of the ways we prepare our students for social work practice.

To maximize our students' academic experiences and to optimize the learning environment in the School, certain standards of conduct must be observed by all students. First, honesty in the classroom and honesty with self, organizations and clients is

expected. Second, respect for self, clients, organizations and members of the School community is expected, as well as an understanding of how one's behavior and attitude affects the work one does both inside the classroom and within a partner agency. Third, compliance with the expectations established by field instruction agencies is expected. Deliberate noncompliance is extremely serious and can result in sanctions leading to dismissal from the program.

The curriculum of the School of Social Work is designed to meet the standards of the Council on Social Work Education which is the accrediting body for academic social work programs.

Social work students are expected to conform to the following regulations as well as all other University, College, and School rules and regulations.

### 3.2. Social Work Attributes that Lead to Successful Practice

Perhaps more than any other profession, social workers are expected to have a special blend of personal and professional attributes that in combination create a powerful force for the betterment of our clients, agencies in which we work and society as a whole. As future members of the social work profession, social work students should be personally building these attributes. The set of attributes includes:

**Self-Awareness** – Social work students are willing to examine and change their behavior to be able to work effectively with others.

**Professional Commitment** – Social work students have a strong commitment to the goals and the ethical standards of the profession. They are committed to the essential values of social work: dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources.

**Practice Knowledge Base** – The professional activities of social work students are grounded in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research. This includes knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, interventions, and evaluation of practice, research and advocacy.

**Empathy** – Social work students strive to comprehend the way of life and values of others. They are able to communicate this empathy and support to clients as a basis for productive professional relationships.

**Appreciation of Diversity** – Social work students appreciate the value of human diversity. They strive to appropriately serve all those in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender identity, ability, sexual orientation and value system.

**Interpersonal Skills** – Social work students demonstrate the interpersonal skills required to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and other

professionals. These skills include compassion, altruism, integrity, respect and consideration for others.

**Professional Behavior** – Social work students behave professionally by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, adhering to the profession’s code of ethics, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, and completing assignments on time.

**Energy** – Social work students resist the undesirable effects of stress by using appropriate self-care and developing cooperative and facilitative relationships with instructors, staff, fellow students, and clients.

#### 4. Overview of Programs

The School has educational majors in **Clinical Practice** and **Organizational and Community Leadership**.

*So what is the difference between the  
Clinical (Micro) and Organization and Community Leadership (Macro)  
focus in Social Work?*

**Macro practice** has been defined as the practice of solving social problems and making change at the community, organizational, and societal levels using professionally guided interventions. It also emphasizes the importance of advocacy and social change efforts directed at large social systems/networks including efforts at the program, agency, system, community, regional, national and international levels.

Some examples of jobs that would be reflective of macro/OCL practice are:

Administrator	Community Educator	Grant Writer
Advocacy Director/Liaison/Representative		Policy Analyst
Resource Developer	Program Evaluator/Manager/Coordinator/Officer	
Community Development Specialist	Higher Education – Program Coordinator	

In the **Clinical (Micro)** concentration, learning is focused on advanced theory, knowledge, values and skills for supporting positive change for individuals, families and small groups. It emphasizes the importance of advocacy and social change efforts directed at individuals/families/small groups – not at the systems in which the participant(s) exists.

Some examples of jobs/areas that would be reflective of micro/Clinical practice are:

Individual/Group Therapist	Private Practice	Developmental Disabilities
School Social Worker	Mental Health Worker	
Geriatric Social Worker – Nursing Home/Residential Facility	Juvenile Justice/Corrections	
Substance Abuse	Social Worker in a Medical Setting	

The School offers **Certificate Programs** to further prepare students for practice in specific fields. These programs require focused courses (typically electives in the chosen area of specialty) and specialty field placement. SSW Certificates include:

- Addictions Studies
- Chance at Childhood Program in Child and Family Advocacy
- Child Welfare
- Clinical Social Work with Families
- Evidence Based Trauma Treatment
- Levande Program in Gerontology
- School Social Work
- Social Work in Healthcare
- Infancy and Early Childhood (a University specialization supported by the SSW)

Certificate programs are not required. Students can choose to customize their elective credits or complete an optional certificate. Certificates require an application process and numbers may be limited due to field education or course size constraints. Certificates include: 1) required courses, 2) social work electives or approved courses from other units across campus, 3) corresponding field placement and 4) content that is often available (perhaps with necessary modifications) to all program sites.

More information about the School and University Certificate Programs can be found on the school website ([http://socialwork.msu.edu/msw/certificate\\_programs.php](http://socialwork.msu.edu/msw/certificate_programs.php)) and also at the following online locations:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/Read/UCC/gradcert.pdf>

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/Read/UCC/terminology.pdf>

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/AcademicPrograms/Text.asp?Section=111#s2244>

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/ucc/guidelines.asp>

Applicants to the REGULAR MSW PROGRAM can select part-time or full-time enrollment status. The part-time option requires completion of the MSW program on a three-year plan of study, while fulltime students complete the program in two academic years.

The ADVANCED STANDING MSW PROGRAM is open to applicants who have graduated from a Council on Social Work Education accredited social work baccalaureate program within the last six years. The full-time option allows for completion of requirements within one calendar year and the part-time program allows for two calendar years, with both options starting in the second half of the Summer semester and ending in the Spring semester.

Students must have sufficient flexibility in their personal and professional lives to commit to taking classes (with course loads usually exceeding the University's minimum

credits for full- and part-time statuses) and being in field placement (with schedules of at least 16 hours per week each semester). The School of Social Work cannot grant academic credit for life or previous work experience in lieu of any course or field education.

#### 4.1. Curriculum Overview

The MSU program curriculum has two major sections: a generalist foundation and advanced skills educational content, both with field placements. Following is a description of these sections, as well as an overview of courses. For course descriptions, please visit <http://www.reg.msu.edu/Courses/search.asp>

##### 4.1.1. Generalist Foundation

The generalist foundation is comprised of courses that provide the grounding for all professional social work practice, regardless of setting, specialization or professional role. There are three content areas and five curriculum sequence areas required by the Council on Social Work Education that are integrated into our foundation courses.

The three content areas are:

1. Values and Ethics
2. Diversity
3. Populations-at-Risk and Social and Economic Justice

The five curriculum sequences are:

1. Human Behavior and the Social Environment
2. Social Welfare Policy and Services
3. Social Work Practice
4. Research
5. Field Education

Core courses include:

Introduction to Professional Social Work Practice (one day seminar for students without a BSW)  
SW 810 Theories of Groups, Organizations, and Communities in Social Work (3 credits)  
SW 811 Social Work Perspectives in Human Development (3 credits)  
SW 820 Social Welfare Policy and Services (3 credits)  
SW 829 Essential Research Tools for Social Work Practice (2 credits)  
SW 830 Applied Social Work Research: Experimental and Quasi-experimental Design (2 credits)  
SW 840 Generalist Social Work Practice Methods I (3 credits)  
SW 841 Generalist Social Work Practice Methods II (3 credits)  
SW 894A Social Work Field Instruction: Graduate Generalist Practice I (4 credits)  
SW 894B Social Work Field Instruction: Graduate Generalist Practice II (4 credits)

Total Credit Hours for Required Core Courses for the MSW Program: 27

Six elective credits are required to complete the MSW degree (meet the 57 credit hour requirements). To count towards the MSW, elective courses must be taken while the student is enrollment as a graduate student and must be taken at a 400 level or above.

#### 4.1.2. Advanced Skills

Building on the foundation knowledge and skills acquired in the generalist core courses are advanced-level courses designed to prepare our students for professional social work practice in either Clinical Social Work (micro-level interventions) or Organizational and Community Leadership (macro-level interventions).

Advanced base courses include:

- SW 832 Applied Social Work Research: Survey and Field Design (2 credits)
- SW 845 Administration Skills for Social Work Practice (3 credits)
- SW 822 Topics in Policy Practice and Advocacy (3 credits)

Total Credit Hours for Advanced Base Courses: 8

#### 4.1.3. Clinical Practice Concentration

The clinical practice concentration prepares students to practice advanced skills in a variety of settings that focus on individuals, families, and small groups.

Advanced clinical courses include:

- SW 843 Clinical Assessment and Diagnosis (2 credits)
- SW 850 Clinical Social Work Advanced Practice I (3 credits)
- SW 851 Clinical Social Work Advanced Practice II (3 credits)
- SW 894D Social Work Field Instruction: Clinical Practice I (4 credits)
- SW 894E Social Work Field Instruction: Clinical Practice II (4 credits)

Total Credits for Clinical Practice Concentration: 16

#### 4.1.4. Organizational and Community Leadership Concentration

The organizational and community leadership concentration prepares students to practice with advanced skills in policy making, community organizing, program planning, program implementation, and program evaluation.

Advanced organizational and community leadership courses include:

- SW 844 Essential Theories in Organizations and Communities Social Work Practice (2 credits)
- SW 863 Organizational and Community Social Work Advanced Practice I (3 credits)
- SW 864 Organizational and Community Social Work Advanced Practice II (3 credits)
- SW 894G Social Work Field Instruction: Organizational and Community Leadership I (4 credits)
- SW 894I Social Work Field Instruction: Organizational and Community Leadership II (4 credits)

Total Credits for Organizational and Community Leadership Concentration: 16

#### 4.1.5. Field Education Expectations and Field Review Guidelines

Within the MSW Program, students complete four semesters of field education for a total of 960 field hours. In the Advanced Standing Program students complete three semesters for a total of 600 field hours. The format is that students participate in field for sixteen hours per week, during the normal workday (8 a.m. - 5 p.m., Monday through Friday) for fifteen weeks during each of four semesters. All students must receive one hour per week of supervision by an MSW level field instructor. Ten hours of field seminar attended per semester are counted as field hours. Seminars are organized and facilitated by the field liaisons who are representatives of the School and are responsible for enriching, monitoring and evaluating the placement experiences of their assigned students.

Social Work students must maintain acceptable academic standing including successful performance in their field placement and liaison group. The Field Review Guidelines describe the process used regarding field performance concerns. The Field Review might then be followed by the more formal Academic Standing and Student Review. It is the School's intention that these steps assist students to successfully meet field program requirements.

1. The Field Instructor will immediately notify the Liaison and the Liaison will notify the appropriate Field Director who will advise the Lead Field Coordinator of any performance difficulties.

2. An emergency liaison visit will be made to the agency with a meeting to include all involved parties. This must include but is not limited to the student, the field instructor and the liaison.

3. Performance problems that are not resolved as a result of the above meeting will then be referred to the Field Education Coordinator of the program in which the student is enrolled and the Lead Field Coordinator for further attention. It is likely that an additional meeting (Field Review meeting) will be recommended involving some combination of the following: the student, the liaison, the Field Coordinator, the Lead Field Coordinator, relevant faculty members, the Graduate Advisor, the MSW Program Coordinator, and the Director of the School. Depending upon circumstances, the field instructor may or may not be present. The student may invite an individual s/he considers a helpful support in these circumstances. Should the student choose to invite another individual to this meeting, it must be a person connected to the school in some way and must be approved by the person convening the Field Review.

These meetings are not to be interpreted as disciplinary or adversarial. They are efforts to work with students to find ways to successfully accomplish field education goals. If this process is considered unsuccessful by the Lead Field Coordinator, a formal academic review will then be requested.

In the event that a student's placement terminates during the semester (and the student is not re-placed), the student will not be allowed to remain enrolled in social work practice

courses, i.e., SW 842B, SW840, SW 841, SW 850, SW 851, SW 863, or SW864, because concurrent enrollment is required for assignments.

For further information concerning Field Education, please consult the Field Education Manual at [http://socialwork.msu.edu/field\\_education/docs/field\\_edu\\_manual.pdf](http://socialwork.msu.edu/field_education/docs/field_edu_manual.pdf)

#### 4.1.6. Curriculum Grids

See Appendices 1-9

### 5. Student Advising

Advising orients students to the profession and assists in assessing their aptitude and motivation for a career in social work. It also provides for early and periodic evaluation of student performance, guides students in their selection of areas of course work, and explores with students the selection of elective credits that best meet their educational needs and goals.

Students in the School of Social Work are expected to make use of the Graduate Advisor. Advising in a professional school is an important activity that not only clarifies how to complete academic program requirements but also provides students with a forum to discuss a variety of professional topics such as career opportunities and career goals and aspirations. The Graduate Advisor provides guidance to students regarding the details of the academic requirements of the MSW program. There is a Graduate Advisor in each MSW program and the Advisor is available for those program students to discuss course selection, certificate programs, School of Social Work and MSU policies and procedures, concerns about course work, and issues affecting academic performance and professional and/or career-related advising.

#### 5.1. Grading

Grading in each course is based on evaluation by the instructor of a student's academic performance. Students are informed of all course requirements and grading criteria at the beginning of each course. Grading criteria for each course are included in the course syllabi. Students should consult the course instructor if questions arise about grading.

##### 5.1.1. Standards

Numbered grades equate to categories of performance.

4.0	Excellent
3.5	Good
3.0	Average
2.5	Below Average
2.0	Below Average
1.5	Failing/No Credit Given
1.0	Failing/No Credit Given
0.0	Failing/No Credit Given
I	Incomplete



1. Academic credit is awarded at the **minimum level of 2.0** for graduate students. The minimum cumulative grade point average **required for graduation is a 3.0** for graduate students. A graduate student who accumulates grades below 3.0 in more than two (2) semester courses of three or more credits each is removed from candidacy for the degree. All grades submitted by instructors are final and can only be changed through the Grade Grievance Procedure.
2. For a student in any of the programs, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than two courses of three or more credits each removes the student from candidacy for the degree. In addition, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than three courses of two credits will also remove students from degree candidacy. That is, ***an accumulation of more than 6 credits below a 3.0 will result in dismissal from the program.***
3. **Advanced Standing MSW students must receive grades of at least 3.0 in all courses.** A grade below 3.0 can result in a student's dismissal from the Advanced Standing MSW Program and/or the MSW Program.
4. It is required that graduate students earn a **grade of at least 3.0 in field education and practice methods courses.**

5.1.2. Postponement of Grading

When special or unusual circumstances occur, the instructor can postpone assignment of the student's final grade in a course by submitting an I-Incomplete or DF-Deferred in lieu of a grade. *In the School of Social Work, incomplete or deferred grades received in foundation required courses must be removed prior to the student's enrollment in any required advanced courses.*

5.1.3. I-Incomplete Grades

I-Incomplete is given only when:

1. The student has successfully completed at least twelve (12) weeks of the semester and 75% of the course assignments, but is unable to complete course work and/or take the final examination because of documented illness or other compelling reasons, and
2. Has done satisfactory work in the course, and
3. In the instructor's judgment, the student can complete the required work without repeating the course.

Student and instructor have completed, signed and submitted the University, Agreement for an incomplete form to graduate office staff for the student's file. The form can be found at: [http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/I\\_Agreement.pdf](http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/I_Agreement.pdf)

Examples of compelling reasons are:

1. Illness or injury that makes it impossible for the student to complete course work and is documented by a physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition, or

2. Illness or injury of a close relative for whom the student is responsible for providing daily care and documented by physician's written statement attesting to the serious nature of the condition.

When these conditions are met, the instructor specifies what the student must do and by when it must be done to remove the I-Incomplete. However, all coursework and exams must be completed by the middle of the following semester to be considered as successful course completion.

All required work must be completed and a grade must be reported to the Office of the Registrar no later than the middle of the student's next semester in attendance (summer session excluded) if that semester is within one calendar year following receipt of the I-Incomplete. An extension of time for completion of the required work can be approved by the College offering the course only by means of an Administrative Action form documenting physician-certified illness or other extraordinary circumstances such as those for which an initial I-Incomplete grade would be given. Such an extension could allow for completion as late as the end of the student's next semester in attendance. A student who does not register for MSU classes subsequent to the receipt of an I-Incomplete has one calendar year to complete the required work. It is the student's responsibility to complete the course work and submit it to the instructor, allowing adequate time for the instructor to grade the work and submit the grade to the Registrar.

Failure to complete the required work by the due date will result in a grade of I-0.0. This grade then remains part of the student's academic record, and the course can be completed only by re-enrollment.

#### 5.1.4. DF-Deferred Grades

DF grading is used rarely and only in extraordinarily unusual circumstances. The required work must be completed and a grade reported within 6 months, with the option of a single six-month extension. If the required work is not completed within the time limit, the DF will become U-Unfinished and will be changed to DF/U under the numerical grading system. This grade then remains part of the student's academic record, and the course can be completed only by re-enrollment.

#### 5.2. Repeating a Course

The University policy is that a graduate student who received a grade of 2.0 or above in a course may not repeat the course on a credit basis, with the following exception: with the approval of the assistant dean, a graduate student may repeat a course in which a grade of 2.0 or 2.5 was received. The number of credits that a graduate student may repeat is determined by the student's graduate advisor in accordance with unit policies.

The School of Social Work's policy is that a maximum of two, three-credit hour courses can be repeated; but courses that are designated as "Special Topics" cannot be repeated. Whenever a course is repeated on a credit basis, the last grade and credits earned

completely replace the previous grade in computing grade-point averages; however, all entries remain a part of the student's permanent academic record.

Any course repeated for credit must be taken on the same grading system under which the course was taken the first time, except where standard requirements to the contrary must be satisfied to meet graduation requirements. Any course repeated due to failure or unacceptable grades (below a 2.0) must be taken in the normal sequence of course offering (e.g. a course offered in the Spring semester cannot be taken in the Fall semester). A student will be given only one opportunity to repeat a course.

Should a student in the MSW program receive a grade lower than 2.0, an Academic Standing and Student Review will be conducted to determine whether the student will be removed from candidacy for the degree.

### 5.3. Student Grievance Procedures

A student grievance is a serious matter and should not be undertaken frivolously. A student who strongly believes, and has evidence to substantiate, that s/he has been treated unfairly or in a way that diminishes her/his rights, may file a complaint or grievance alleging a violation. The *Michigan State University Student Rights and Responsibilities (SRR)* and the *Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR)* documents establish the rights and responsibilities of MSU students and prescribe procedures to resolve allegations of violations of those rights through formal grievance hearings. In accordance with the SRR and the GSRR, the School of Social Work MSW Program has established Graduate Student Academic Grievance Hearing Procedures for adjudicating graduate student academic grievances and complaints. (See GSRR 5.4.) The Hearing Board and its Chair are formed by the School, made up of both faculty and graduate students. The School's Director, the MSW Program Director, or the Graduate Advisor will provide information about possible actions. In addition, the University Ombudsperson, located at 129 N. Kedzie Hall, (<https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>) can be helpful in directing students with complaints to appropriate resources. Section 5.3.6.1 of the GSRR states, "grievances must normally be initiated no later than mid-term of the semester following the one wherein the alleged violation occurred (exclusive of summer semester)." The GSRR requires "student grievances alleging violation of academic and professional rights must be initiated at the lowest administrative level feasible" (GSRR 5.3.6.2). The School suggests that those contemplating filing a grievance first pursue informal resolution of differences by discussing concerns with the instructor(s) and administrators within the School of Social Work. Most often, disputes can be settled informally without pursuing a formal grievance.

Procedures for graduate student grievances follow those described in Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities, Michigan State University, Article 5. If a grievance is not satisfactorily resolved in conference between the student and instructor or administrator directly involved in the grievance, then a written request for an academic grievance hearing must (1) specify the specific bases for the grievance, including the alleged violation(s), (2) identify the individual against whom the grievance is filed (the

respondent) and (3) state the desired redress. Anonymous grievances will not be accepted. (See GSRR 5.1 and 5.3.6.)

#### 5.4. Student Grade Grievance Procedures

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities document establishes general rules for grade appeals for students. In such a hearing, the student has the burden of proof that her/his grade has been based on factors other than, or in addition to performance, such as race, sex, personal animosity or the like. Neither disappointment with a grade, hard work that was not rewarded, nor an instructor's very high standards constitute grounds for a viable grade grievance. In hearings in which a graduate student seeks to contest allegations of academic misconduct, the instructor bears the burden of proof. As stated in GSRR 5.3.2, the grievant must put in writing what is believed was unfair and the remedy being sought. After receiving a graduate student's written request for a hearing, the Chair/Director of the Department will promptly refer the grievance to the Chair of the Hearing Board. The Hearing Board pool should include both faculty and graduate students. The Chair of the Hearing Board shall be the faculty member with rank who shall vote only in the event of a tie. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Board shall include an equal number of voting graduate students and faculty. No one on the board should have any immediate involvement with the course or the parties, nor have any conflict of interest, whether real or perceived. The hearing board must adhere to the time limits established in grievance policy.

Each party will have access to any documents that constitute "evidence." Each party has a right to present whatever s/he considers to be relevant, to have supporting witnesses if s/he wishes, to question the other party and any witnesses, to rebut any "evidence," and to have counsel from within the University either for advisory purposes or to present the case on her/his behalf. A witness should be confined to her/his own recollection, not that of others.

Procedurally, the Chair of the Hearing Board makes introductory remarks. The complainant presents without interruption any statements relevant to the complainant's case, including the redress sought followed by questions to the complainant and/or advisor, if any, and the same procedure holds for the complainant's witnesses. The respondent presents without interruption any statements relevant to the respondent's case followed by questions to the respondent and/or advisor, if any, and the same procedure holds for the respondent's witnesses. Then rebuttal and closing statements are given by both the complainant and the respondent. The Hearing Board asks any final questions of any of the participants in the hearing. This is an informal hearing. The panel will listen to the facts of the matter at hand. Additional information could be requested. The Chair will keep the discussion focused and assure that civility is maintained. Time limits are at the Chair's discretion. There will be a written record of the session that can be used in an appeal. Both party's, counsel and witnesses will then be excused and the panel will meet in executive session to deliberate. The panel's decision and written rationale will be distributed to the parties. This can be used in an appeal.

Appeals must be justifiable. An appeal is a review of the record for procedural and due process issues. It is not a fresh hearing or an opportunity for introduction of new issues. Appeal of a School decision is made to the College of Social Science. Either party can appeal. The Parties should consult the MSU publication, Graduate Students Rights and Responsibilities Article 5: Adjudication of cases involving graduate student rights and responsibilities, for further information concerning grievance procedures.

#### 5.5. Office of the University Ombudsperson

Conflicts, disagreements, and issues sometimes arise during the course of a graduate program. If you find yourself in this situation and have exhausted the internal resources for resolving the issue, you may contact the Office of the University Ombudsperson.

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides assistance to students, faculty, and staff in resolving University-related concerns. Such concerns include: student-faculty conflicts; communication problems; concerns about the university climate; and questions about what options are available for handling a problem according to Michigan State University policy. The University Ombudsperson also provides information about available resources and student/faculty rights and responsibilities. The office operates as a confidential, independent, and neutral resource. It does not provide notice to the University - that is, it does not speak or hear for the University.

Contact the Ombudsperson at any point during an issue when a confidential conversation or source of information may be needed. The Ombudsperson will listen to your concerns, give you information about University policies, help you evaluate the situation, and assist you in making plans to resolve the conflict. Contact information:

#### 5.6. Academic Standing and Student Review (ASSR)

##### 5.6.1 Definition

Social work students must maintain acceptable academic standing including successful performance in their field education. Additionally, as a professional school, the School of Social Work has the responsibility to assure that our matriculated students uphold the professional standards of the NASW code of ethics. On the rare occasions when students do not maintain acceptable standing, the Academic Standing and Student Review (ASSR) process is used to assist students in meeting program requirements.

Review of the standing of students who are experiencing academic or performance problems is a process intended to provide timely and ongoing assessment and support to students who need assistance. This process is designed to be helpful to students as well as protect the academic standards of the School and the ethics and standards of the social work profession. The ASSR accesses the resources of the School, College and University to assist students to be successful in their chosen major.

The ASSR is not a student complaint or grievance procedure. If a student believes that a grade(s) has been assigned unfairly or that a violation of her/his student rights has

occurred, the student should initiate an informal complaint or formal grievance (see A, Student Grade Grievance Procedures). The ASSR is initiated by faculty on behalf of a student whose academic problems are threatening her/his status as a student in the School.

#### 5.6.2 Standards

The professional standards are:

Interactions and relationships with faculty, staff, students/peers, and field agency staff and clients are to be approached and conducted in an ethical and professional manner.

Student behaviors and activities will reflect the NASW Code of Ethics.

It is required that graduate students earn a grade of at least 3.0 in field education and practice methods courses.

Field education and practice methods courses are integral parts of the graduate social work curriculum. In the event that a student's work in these courses is substandard, the following actions can occur:

1. When a graduate student earns a grade below 3.0 in field education and/or practice methods courses, an Academic Standing and Student Review will be held to review her/his academic standing and determine a course of action, which may include course repetition or dismissal from the program. If the grade of concern originates in field placement, a Field Review will be held prior to the ASSR.
2. Failure in field instruction and methods courses mandates that a student will not be allowed to continue in the program unless certain conditions are met. These conditions will be determined in an Academic Standing and Student Review.

Below are a set of standards that could lead to a student's dismissal.

1. For a student in any of the programs, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than two courses of three or more credits each removes the student from candidacy for the degree. In addition, the accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than three courses of two credits will also remove students from degree candidacy. That is, an accumulation of more than 6 credits below a 3.0 will result in dismissal from the program.
2. An overall GPA below 3.0 in more than two consecutive semesters of three or more credits each removes the students from candidacy for the degree.
3. Advanced Standing MSW students must receive grades of at least 3.0 in all courses. A grade below 3.0 can result in a student's dismissal from the Advanced Standing MSW Program and/or the MSW Program.

### 5.6.3 Process

The Director of the MSW Programs determines that an ASSR should be called based on information provided by the Graduate Office, Field Office or an individual instructor. The process is designed to be non-adversarial. The Director or designee will schedule and Chair the ASSR hearing board. The graduate advisor, classroom instructor, the faculty liaison and the Director of Field Instruction if the situation involves a field education performance problem will constitute the hearing board. (Note: The agency-based field instructor cannot participate.)

The student is expected to attend and can bring an “advocate-supporter” who must be someone from the University community, i.e. a faculty member or another student. The advocate-supporter will not have an active role in this proceeding, and is not allowed to participate verbally. If the student refuses to attend the ASSR, the hearing will still be held. After exploring the situation the participants make a recommendation(s) that will be reported to the Director of the School who could concur, modify or reject them. The student is able to appeal or dispute the recommendation to the Director. The recommendation will be formulated in a written report of the hearing submitted to the student and to the Director.

The report and recommendation will be kept in a confidential file accessible only by the Graduate Advisor and Director of the MSW Programs. It will not be used in a reference letter or any other similar document. The student can write one addendum to the report if s/he wishes which will be kept with the report and recommendation. It is the responsibility of the student to acknowledge receipt and understanding of the recommendations made at the ASSR; failure to follow them is cause for dismissal.

### 5.6.4 Reasons for Calling an ASSR

An ASSR is called by the Director of the MSW Programs to determine whether the student can complete the program given that specific remedies can be identified. The table below provides examples of events that trigger an ASSR, steps a student must take to rectify the situation, and consequences of not completing the steps. GSSR 5.5: Academic Dismissal and Academic Disciplinary Cases describes sanctions assessed for academic disciplinary cases.

<b>EXAMPLES OF PRECIPITATING EVENTS</b>	<b>STUDENT'S STEPS TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCES OF NOT COMPLETING STEPS</b>
Student has not completed MSW Program prerequisites in the allotted time.	Student must present a plan describing how s/he will complete the prerequisites during the next semester. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members.	Student will be dismissed from the program if the pre-requisites are not completed according to the agreed upon plan.
Student's GPA falls below 3.0. Coordinator of MSW Programs must convene an ASSR.	Student must present a plan describing how s/he will raise GPA during the next semester. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members.	Student will be dismissed from the program if the GPA is below 3.0 for second consecutive semester.
Student receives a second grade below a 3.0. Coordinator of the MSW Programs must convene an ASSR.	Depending on the results of the ASSR, student may be required to repeat the courses to attain a grade of 3.0 or above.	If the student is required to repeat courses, s/he will be dismissed from the program if unable to raise grades to 3.0 or above.
Unsuccessful completion of field instruction or the accompanying methods course, generally graded as an "I" or a "DF" grade. It is required that graduate students earn a grade of at least a Pass or 3.0 in fieldwork and methods courses. Any student who does not earn a grade of a Pass or 3.0 or above in these courses in any semester will be asked to participate in an Academic Standing and Student Review (ASSR).	Student must present a plan describing how s/he will complete course work within a specified time period. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members. If the student discovers that the plan cannot be implemented as agreed upon, the student must notify the Chair of the ASSR and present a new plan.	Student may be dismissed from the program.
In the opinion of a faculty member or members, a student is experiencing difficulty that threatens her/his academic progress.	Student must present a plan describing how academic performance will be improved within a specified time period. The plan must be approved by the ASSR members. The plan can include taking a leave of absence to attend to difficulties external to the program that are impeding the student's ability to successfully complete the program. The student must follow the plan and complete course work, attaining grades of 3.0 or above since this is required by the Graduate School for degree completion.	Student will be dismissed from the program.
Allegations of unethical conduct made by any student, or any faculty member, requires an ASSR. Appropriate actions beyond the School will be taken if indicated.	If allegations are not substantiated, student will be able to remain in the program and must strictly adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and MSU and School of Social standard.	If allegations are substantiated, student will be dismissed from the program. Depending on the type of misconduct, appropriate authorities will be notified.



## 5.7 Non-Academic Review (NAR)

Because ours is a professional program, social work students must demonstrate that they possess the qualities necessary to become social work practitioners in addition to successfully completing their academic work. Although it happens on rare occasions, there are times when faculty and/or field education staff members feel strongly that a particular student does not possess these qualities. In that event, a non-academic review is called to talk with the student about leaving the MSW program. Students wishing to return from a leave of absence also may be asked to participate in a non-academic review prior to enrolling for classes.

Reasons for non-academic review:

1. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity interpersonal skills or deportment required for professional practice, or inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward peers, faculty or staff at school or field education
2. Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships such as acceptance of client differences, dealing with transference/counter-transference issues, and promoting and/or honoring client self-determination.
3. Criminal activity, as defined as charges and rulings of civil adjudication and or/criminal convictions while enrolled in the MSW program. The School reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any student whose criminal offense and conviction or civil adjudication is of a nature that is contrary to the NASW Code of Ethics, and/or when the conviction/adjudication prohibits the student from securing a field placement.

Note: The application for licensure as a social worker asks questions about: felony conviction, misdemeanor conviction punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of two years, misdemeanor conviction involving the illegal delivery, possession, or use of alcohol or a controlled substance, and treatment for substance abuse in the past two years. The Michigan Board of Licensing reviews applications for licensure and will decide about moral fitness; they may refuse to grant a social work license to the applicant.

Should it be determined that a student meets any of the reasons, a non-academic review meeting will be called by the MSW Program Director. The meeting will be attended by the student, MSW Program Director, Graduate Advisor and other faculty who have voiced concerns about the student. The student can bring an “advocate-supporter” who must be someone from the University community. The advocate supporter will not have an active part in this meeting. The student will be asked to speak about the concerns and to provide any evidence that would dispute the information that was provided to the MSW Program Director. The Director will make a determination about whether the student should be removed from candidacy and dismissed from the MSW program.

Should the student disagree with the determination, s/he can present information to the Director of the School who will either uphold or overturn the determination. The Director's factual review will look at the information presented and the process used to make the determination.

## 5.8 Informal Administrative Review

On occasions, the MSW Program Director or Graduate Advisor will call a meeting with students, faculty and administrators to informally attempt to resolve a specific student problem without invoking the formal ASSR process. These meetings are informal and are designed to promote informal resolution of issues. If the meeting does not produce a resolution or if the student does not meet the conditions set forth in the meeting, a more formal meeting will be called.

## 6. University Services

### 6.1. Writing Center

Location: 300 Bessey Hall.  
Phone: 517-432-3610  
Website: <http://writing.msu.edu/>

The Writing Center staff consults with writers at all levels of proficiency and at all stages of the composing process. Students can go to the Writing Center on their own or at the suggestion of a faculty member.

### 6.2. Learning Resources Center

Location: 202 Bessey Hall  
Phone: 517-355-2363  
Website: <http://lrc.msu.edu/>

Staff is available to help with everything from understanding difficult texts and programming your graphing calculator to converting .wmv files for your iPod and making high-impact PowerPoint presentations.

### 6.3. Center for Service Learning and Civil Engagement

Location: 27 Student Services Bldg.  
Phone: 517-353-2363  
Website: <http://servicelearning.msu.edu>

Provides active, service-focused, community-based, mutually beneficial, integrated learning opportunities for students, building and enhancing their commitment to academics, personal and professional development, and civic responsibility.

### 6.4. Career Services and Placement

Location: 113 Student Services Bldg.  
Phone: 517-355-9510  
Website: <http://csp.msu.edu>

Assists students find part-time employment while in school and career placement services upon graduation. Provides workshops on resume writing, interviewing, and other related topics.

6.5. College of Social Science Field Career Services Consultant

Location: 201C Berkey Hall  
Phone: 517-353-9202  
Website: [http://socialscience.msu.edu/career\\_services](http://socialscience.msu.edu/career_services)

Career Services helps students to identify career options, design their personal career plan, develop job/internship search strategies, plan for graduate school and much more.

6.6. Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities

Location: 120 Bessey Hall  
Phone: 517-353-9642  
Website: <http://rcpd.msu.edu>

Staff specialists are available to respond to mobility, visual, hearing, alternative learner, and other populations to facilitate their involvement in University activities. Other resources are available for students with special needs.

6.7. Counseling Center

Location: 207 Student Services Bldg.  
Phone: 517-355-8270  
Website: <http://counseling.msu.edu>

Students should feel free to contact the Counseling Center for personal concerns and crisis counseling. Professional counseling and psychological services are offered to assist with personal as well as career concerns. All services are confidential. Initial consultations are free of charge; all services are free to students carrying 1 or more credits in the semester they receive services.

6.8. Student Health Services

Location: Olin Health Center  
Phone: 517-884-6546  
Website: <http://olin.msu.edu>

Primary medical care for both acute and chronic medical problems is available on a walk-in and appointment basis. Phone Information Nurse is available 24hrs/7days a week.

7. Academic Policies

All students enrolled in the academic programs of the School of Social Work are held accountable to academic regulations specified by the School, the College of Social Science and by the University in effect at the time they are admitted. These regulations are printed in this manual, and in the University publications, Academic Programs and Graduate Studies.

### 7.1. Registration

Students are provided with several resources they can use to assure that they are enrolling in courses that are appropriate given their status in the MSW program. This Manual describes the MSW curriculum and provides a table that describes the sequences in which courses should be taken. In addition, during Fall Orientation, students are given a grid that displays the sequence of courses and those that must be taken concurrently. Prior to course registration, students should consult the Graduate Advisor for the program in which the student is enrolled about their academic programs when they have questions about program requirements. Students should enroll as soon as possible for courses to assure that they get into the sections of courses they desire. Students should enroll for Spring Semester classes when they enroll for the Fall Semester. The School guarantees a seat for all required courses, but cannot guarantee that each student will get into the specific section s/he prefers. Before registration in the Spring, the Graduate Advisor will send out a reminder to the MSWLIST about registration for the following year's courses.

Registration and course enrollment processes are a University function, managed by the Office of the Registrar. See <http://www.reg.msu.edu/>. The Office of the Registrar sends students notification of their enrollment times for classes (as opposed to their School advisor). Questions about enrollment restrictions should first be directed to this Office. The MSW advisor will send academic and registration reminders to support this process. A comprehensive list of the Office of the Registrar and the Academic Calendar can be found at: <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Calendar/Academic.aspx>.

### 7.2. Change of Enrollment

The process for changing enrollment is detailed at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/EnrReg/Lateadds.asp>

### 7.3. Overrides

There is no guarantee that an override will be granted when the section is at its maximum capacity. Instructors make these decisions because the number of students in their sections has a strong impact on the class dynamics and the faculty member's resources.

### 7.4. Independent Study Courses

Graduate students might have academic interests that cannot be pursued within the context of established courses. At Michigan State University, Independent Study is planned study, highly individualized, not addressable through any other course format, proposed in writing by the student on a standard form, accepted for supervision by a faculty member, and approved by the student's academic advisor and the School at the beginning of the semester. (See Academic Programs) Independent study, in conjunction with the MSW degree, can only be done to fulfill elective credits. In consultation with their advisors, students can submit a proposal to complete an independent study project to a member of the School's faculty who has expertise in their area of interest. This

proposal is submitted on an Independent Study Form available online at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/read/pdf/indestudyapp.pdf>. The faculty member who approves the Independent Study will approve projects and sign an Independent Study Form verifying their willingness to work with students. Students will present a copy of this form to the Graduate Programs Office Assistant who will issue an override for SW 890.

Required courses cannot be taken as independent study. Students should keep this in mind when they are determining which courses to take in a given semester. The School does not offer every course each semester. The course schedule is predicated on students taking courses in sequence to complete their program. Students who choose not to take courses when they are offered will not be allowed to take required courses as independent study to graduate. They must wait until the required course is offered again.

#### 7.5. Course Auditing

The School of Social Work uses the University's policy pertaining to a Class Visitor. Students must negotiate this status with the instructor of record of the course, including attendance, assignments and other course requirements. It is the responsibility of the student, not the School of Social Work, to contact the Registrar's Office to enroll as a Class Visitor. The policy can be found at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/EnrReg/Visitor.asp>

#### 7.6. Transfer Credits

A student who has completed graduate social work courses at other schools of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education can request to have credit for these courses evaluated by the school for transfer and application toward the two-year MSW degree requirements. Transfer students are not accepted into the Advanced Standing Program. After thorough evaluation, the maximum number of 26 credits could be transferred as specified by School and University policies. Twenty-six credits from another accredited MSW program can be transferred toward the 57 total credit hours required for the MSW degree. Transfer students must complete 31 credit hours toward their MSW degree at the MSU School of Social Work. Credits that have already been used to satisfy the requirements of another degree cannot be applied toward the MSW degree. Graduate social work courses completed satisfactorily as part of a related graduate degree program, where the degree has not been awarded, can be considered for application toward the MSW degree. The Graduate Advisor or the MSW Program Director will evaluate all requests for transfer credit whether for incoming transfer students or students currently enrolled in the MSW program who take courses at other universities. Decisions on the transferability of courses will be made by the MSW Program Director and/or the Graduate Advisors. Non-social work graduate courses from other departments at MSU or from other universities can be considered for transfer credit as electives.

Transfer credit will only be given for courses in which the student has received a grade of 3.0 or higher. The only exception to this policy is when courses are taken through the MSU College of Law. For those courses, transfer credit will be given when the students

received a grade of 2.0 or higher. The School of Social Work cannot grant academic credit for life experience or previous work experience in lieu of any course or field instruction.

#### 7.7. Waiver of Courses Because of Prior Course Work

If graduate students feel they have completed courses elsewhere that could be deemed equivalent to required courses in their graduate program, they should submit course outlines/syllabi and official transcripts showing grades received. These must be presented to the graduate advisor to initiate faculty review for equivalency and credit.

#### 7.8. Residency Requirements

The School of Social Work, the College of Social Science, and the University have residency requirements for graduation.

##### 1. All MSW Students

Students enrolled on a full-time basis in the MSW Program must complete residency requirements by completing a minimum of seven credits for two consecutive semesters. Part-time students complete the residency requirement in the year advanced practice methods and fieldwork courses are completed. Advanced Standing MSW students are required to complete all the requirements for the program in twelve continuous months from the time of entry into the program.

##### 2. Off-Campus Students

The School of Social Work has developed off-campus MSW programs in selected locations around the state. These programs are approved by the Council on Social Work Education. Therefore, residency requirements are met by completing the local program requirements.

#### 7.9. International Students and English Proficiency Examination

Provisional admission is granted to applicants for whom English is a second language. Removal of the provision is attained by successful completion of the MSU English Language Proficiency Examination (<http://elc.msu.edu/testing/msuelt/>). The number of credit hours that students can take is based on the student's performance on the examination. See [www.elc.msu.edu](http://www.elc.msu.edu) for additional information.

#### 7.10. Concurrent Enrollment in Field Instruction and Practice Methods Courses

Students registering for field education courses **MUST** be enrolled concurrently in appropriate practice methods courses. Field courses cannot be taken without accompanying methods courses. These courses are open only to students admitted to the MSW programs. Part-time graduate students in the MSW Program cannot enroll in first-year field courses until other first year required courses are completed or have concurrent enrollment.

For further information about field education requirements, consult The Field Education Manual at [http://socialwork.msu.edu/field\\_education/docs/field\\_edu\\_manual.pdf](http://socialwork.msu.edu/field_education/docs/field_edu_manual.pdf)

#### 7.11. Time Limit for Completion of Degree Program

Graduate students are responsible for monitoring their progress towards completion of degree requirements. They should consult with the Graduate Advisor for clarification. Students are also provided with a program specific curriculum guide during orientation to assist in monitoring progress. The time limit for completion of the MSW degree is six calendar years from the date of enrollment in the first course included for degree certification.

#### 7.12. Terminations and Withdrawals

The following may require a student be terminated or withdraw from the MSW program:

1. Inability to raise the cumulative grade point average to a 3.0 after one semester of probation.
2. The accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than two semester courses of three or more credits each.
3. The accumulation of grades below 3.0 in more than three courses of two credits each.
4. An accumulation of more than 6 credits below a 3.0.
5. Inability to successfully complete fieldwork and/or methods courses.
6. Behavior inconsistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
7. Plagiarism or dishonesty. For more information, visit <https://www.msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html>
8. Violations of law or School, College or University policies.

#### 7.13. Student Reapplication Process

Students who wish to reapply to the MSW program after termination may do so only after a minimum of 12 months absence, and prior to that process must submit a written petition to the Director of the MSW program requesting this opportunity. This petition must include the following information:

1. Readiness to return
2. Plan for completing the program
3. Description of supports or changes that will allow for successful matriculation
4. Accommodations that may be needed to complete the program, and if needed arranged through the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) on campus.

The Director, based on the information provided, will make a determination of the student's suitability to reapply to the program. An interview with the student may also be

required. If the student is allowed to reapply, the application materials submitted will be evaluated by the Admissions Committee based on the criteria outlined in their policies.

#### 7.14. Release of Information about Students and Departmental Student Records

All application materials of matriculated and non-matriculated students, except official transcripts and School and University applications, will be kept in a separate file accessible to the Graduate Advisor, the MSW Program Director and the Director of the School. It will either be destroyed upon graduation or, in the case of non-matriculated students, will be kept for one academic year and then destroyed. The student's MSW program file will be available to MSW Program Director, the Graduate Advisors, and the Graduate Programs Office Assistant. In special circumstances when additional confidentiality is required, student folders will be kept in the Director's office. The typical MSW Program student's departmental file has three sections that include the following information:

1. Grade reports and other pertinent information concerning grades such as notices from the Dean's Office about grade issues, administrative action forms, admissions information such as the acceptance letter from the School, Recommended Action Form, MSW Program Application Form, Graduate School Application form, and undergraduate and graduate school transcripts.
2. Field Education Information such as placement application and confirmations forms, learning agreement and Field Instructor's Assessment Reports.
3. Miscellaneous information pertaining to student's academic progress such as leave of absence requests, awards and fellowship forms.

The School of Social Work adheres to the University's policies pertaining to access to and release of student academic records. Absent a need to know, the University generally does not release student information to third parties, including parents, without the student's permission. There are limited exceptions to these operating guidelines (such as health and safety emergencies), depending on the circumstances of a particular case. The following MSU websites provide detailed information regarding the University's policies on student records:

<http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.asp>

<http://splife.studentlife.msu.edu/graduate-student-rights-and-responsibilities/article-3-student-records-at-michigan-state-university>

The release and disclosure of student records maintained by the University are, in large measure, governed by state and federal laws and by University policy. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) restricts the School and individual faculty members from releasing information concerning a student's academic record. See <https://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.asp> for more details.



Students who want the School and/or individual faculty members to provide letters of reference or recommendation must complete, sign and return a release of information authorization to the faculty member from whom the reference is requested. Without a written release authorization, the School cannot provide letters of reference or recommendation. It can be amended and/or terminated at any time. The FERPA form to request a reference can be found at <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROInfo/Notices/PrivacyGuidelines.asp>

## 8. University Policies

### 8.1. Research by Students

#### Guidelines for Research Involving Human Subjects

Whenever students do research in classes that use human subjects, they must consult with their instructors to determine whether they must go through a review of their projects by the MSU Institutional Review Board (IRB). The mission of the IRB is as follows: Michigan State University is a state-supported land grant institution whose primary mission is the advancement of knowledge and education through programs in teaching, research and extension. Its Institutional Review Boards were established to advance the goal of conducting research with diligence and integrity. The purpose of the committees is to protect the rights, welfare and privacy of human subjects who participate in research conducted by students and/or faculty affiliated with MSU. To achieve this goal, the IRBs will:

1. Require all investigators be educated in the use of human subjects,
2. Review all proposed research involving human subjects prior to initiation of the research,
3. Approve, modify or disapprove research according to established criteria for protection of human subjects, and
4. Monitor approved research to ascertain that human subjects are indeed protected during the performance of the research.

The processes of education, review and monitoring serve to ensure the safe and ethical conduct of research that will protect human subjects in an atmosphere of mutual trust and integrity in the pursuit of knowledge and human benefit.

The investigators and members of the IRB will be guided by the ethical principles outlined in the Belmont Report and the federal requirements (45 CFR 46, 21 CFR 50, 21 CFR 56) Approved by UCRIHS, March 1, 2004. For more information visit <http://hrpp.msu.edu/>

## 8.2. University Policy on Relationship Violence & Sexual Misconduct

Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct are reprehensible and will not be tolerated at Michigan State University. Such behavior subverts the mission of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. The University's relationship violence & sexual misconduct policy can be found at [http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/RVSM\\_Policy.htm](http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/uwidepolproc/RVSM_Policy.htm)

## 8.3. Credit-Sharing Policy

The University Committee for Grad Studies revised the credit sharing policy for Master's programs: If your program includes more than 30 credits, then you may share up to 30% of the total with another Master's program. Social work is a professional School. You may not use other University courses to meet the social work requirements unless those courses are used for elective credits. You may, however, use social work courses, to meet other department requirements.

## 8.4. International Travel

Graduate students traveling internationally for MSU-related work (research data collection, international professional conferences, courses, or other academic business, are strongly encouraged to sign up using the International Travelers Database (even if they are not being reimbursed for travel). This is the best way for MSU to stay in touch with our students if there is an emergency.

[http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers\\_database.htm](http://www.isp.msu.edu/travel/travelers_database.htm)

## 8.5. Grief Absence Policy (as approved by University Council)

For master's (Plan A), master's (Plan B) with research responsibilities, and doctoral students, it is the responsibility of the student to: a) notify their advisor/major professor and faculty of the courses in which they are enrolled of the need for a grief absence in a timely manner, but no later than one week from the student's initial knowledge of the situation, b) provide appropriate verification of the grief absence as specified by the advisor/major professor and faculty, and c) complete all missed work as determined in consultation with the advisor/major professor and faculty. It is the responsibility of the advisor/major professor to: a) determine with the student the expected period of absence – it is expected that some bereavement processes may be more extensive than others depending on individual circumstances, b) receive verification of the authenticity of a grief absence request upon the student's return, and c) make reasonable accommodations so that the student is not penalized due to a verified grief absence. If employed as an RA or TE, the graduate student must also notify their employer. Both employer and student will swiftly communicate to determine how the student's responsibilities will be covered during their absence. Graduate teaching assistants (TAs) should refer to the bereavement policy in the MSU GEU CBU Article 18. Students in the graduate professional colleges (CHM, COM, CVM, LAW) with their own grief absence policies are excluded from the

above and should follow their own policies. Students who believe their rights under this policy have been violated should contact the University Ombudsperson.

## 9. Student Organizations

1. Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GradSAC)  
The purpose of GradSAC is to provide Social Work graduate students with opportunities to participate in the life of the School. All students admitted to one of the School's MSW programs are encouraged to participate in GradSAC activities. GradSAC sponsors activities that support the School's intellectual life. Leaders of GradSAC must be in good academic standing.
2. Students for Multi-Ethnic Community Action (SMCA)  
SMCA was formed to provide academic and social support, programming and networking opportunities related to the interest and issues of students of color. The organization provides a forum for students to exchange ideas and develop programs in the interest of people of color both on campus and within the community. All interested students are welcome.
3. Student Organization for Latino/a Social Workers (OLASW)  
OLASW is the only national, professional organization representing Latino social workers. It works to define and advance the Latino agenda within the social work profession in the United States and Puerto Rico. OLASW helps identify educational, economic and professional barriers that may affect Latino social work students. MSU students are active in the organization in Lansing and Michigan.
4. Triangle Coalition  
This organization seeks to eliminate discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender and gender identity through education and advocacy efforts, while promoting a climate of acceptance, and comfort in exploring lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning concerns at the School, College, University, and community levels. All students, faculty, staff and alumni are welcome.
5. Phi Alpha  
The purpose of the School's Beta Chapter of the national social work honor society is to recognize outstanding academic performance. Membership in Phi Alpha Honor Society is open to graduate students who have met the requirements of overall GPA of 3.5 or higher and a minimum of 27 credits completed in the social work curriculum. The Chapter sponsors two annual receptions to award membership certificates and honor new members.
6. Council of Graduate Students (COGS)  
COGS is the official governing body of all MSU graduate students. The objectives of COGS are to promote the academic, social, and economic aims of graduate and graduate-professional students; to establish effective communication among graduate and graduate professional students; and to create channels of communication with

other student organizations and with the academic and administrative units of the University.

#### 7. Other Organizations

The College of Social Science and the University both recognize outstanding academic achievement. A University-wide Honors Convocation recognizes outstanding student performance. Other recognition is given by election to Mortar Board, Phi Kappa Phi, or Phi Beta Kappa, organizations that admit students based on academic excellence. The Graduate Advisor has information regarding membership criteria for these organizations. Eligible social work students are urged to accept invitations to these prestigious organizations. Spartan Life also gives information about student organizations on campus that offers students a broad array of opportunities for extracurricular activities.

#### 10. Student Participation in Governance

The Graduate Student Advisory Committee (GradSAC) elects members to represent the views of their constituencies at School meetings and meetings of Standing Committees, to consult with the School's faculty, and to meet regularly with the Director.

Students may be represented at regular school meetings by selected members of the student body. School meetings are open to all students majoring in social work who wish to attend without voting privileges. Names of students selected as student representatives to the School meetings will be given to the Director's secretary at the beginning of each semester. The Graduate Student Advisory Committee selects two students to be representatives at School meetings. Elected student representatives can suggest items for the agenda of School meetings by notification to the Director's secretary. Items must be in the Director's office by Monday noon of the week of the School meeting. Agenda items may be deferred at the discretion of the Director of the School when there is not ample time for complete discussion.

#### 11. School Events

##### 1. Fall New MSW Student Orientation

The School hosts an all-day orientation during the first week of Fall Semester. An overview of the School is given as well as specific information regarding school services, procedures and advising. Attendance is required for all enrolled MSW students.

##### 2. Professional Orientation Seminar

One half-day mandatory seminar for incoming graduate students who do not hold Bachelor's degree in Social Work (BSW). The seminar occurs at the beginning of the fall semester.

3. **Advanced Standing Orientation**  
The School hosts an orientation for students in early May. An overview of the School is given as well as specific information regarding AS curriculum, school services, policies, procedures, and advising.
4. **Career Development Day**  
The School hosts a Career Development Day for graduating seniors and MSW students. The topics of the day include but are not limited to licensing, resume and cover letter writing, and interviewing techniques. This is usually held in February.
5. **Field Instruction Orientation and Ongoing Seminars**  
The School requires students to attend a field instruction orientation seminar and 10 hours each semester in ongoing seminars with their field liaison groups.
6. **Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration**  
The School presents an annual program on the beliefs and teachings of Martin Luther King, Jr. and related diversity issues. All social work students, faculty, staff and alumni are invited to participate in this event.
7. **Graduation**  
The School organizes a Recognition Ceremony for graduates and their guests in the Spring of each year with help from the Graduate Student Advisory Committee. This has been a meaningful ceremony attended by most students.

## 12. School of Social Work Services

1. **The School's Website**  
Much information regarding the School of Social Work, its announcements, applications, Handbooks, courses, schedules, calendar, policies and procedures can be found on our website at [www.socialwork.msu.edu](http://www.socialwork.msu.edu).
2. **Schedule**  
The School publishes a Schedule of Courses each semester that contains the most current version of the schedules. It is available on the School's web site at <http://socialwork.msu.edu/courses/index.php>. The most recent updates to the School's schedule will be posted here.
3. **Bulletin Boards**  
The School maintains bulletin boards in the corridors of the second floor of Baker Hall for information that is useful to students, such as notices of conferences, employment opportunities, School events and university activities.
4. **MSU Email Addresses**  
The University provides each student with a free email account. The School and the University use these accounts to communicate with students. It is imperative that all Social Work students access their MSU email accounts on a regular basis to receive information about school events, course offerings, course schedule changes, job and

volunteer opportunities, and other important information. Students are responsible for all information sent to them by MSU email.

5. Student Listserv

The School has a listserv for our students. The listserv provides a venue for disseminating information about School events, reminders, and discussions of relevant topics. All new incoming MSW students are added to the MSW listserv.

6. Lemoyne Snyder Computer Laboratory (521 Baker Hall)

This computer lab is available to students of the School of Social Work. Hours of operation are posted in the computer lab. There are other computer labs around campus that are available to MSU students. Check <http://computerlabs.msu.edu> for locations and hours of operation.

7. Employment Opportunities

Professional social work vacancies are posted throughout the School and sent out on the MSW (current students) and SWJobs (graduated students) listservs.

8. Conference Room (221 Baker Hall)

The Conference Room is used by faculty and students for various types of meetings. Students can schedule this room in the Main Office, 254 Baker Hall.

13. Graduation

13.1. Certification for Graduation

Responsibility for the certification rests with the Office of Graduate Programs. The certification process consists of an assessment of the student's academic record. The assessment ascertains whether the courses necessary to complete the program have been completed or will be completed the next semester and that the student's grade point average is sufficient to graduate. If the student has Incomplete (I) or Deferred (DF) grades, s/he will be asked about the plan for completing the work required in the courses within the necessary timeframe. The certification process is done at a specific point in time prior to completion of course and field education. It is based on the assumption that the student will earn a minimum of 3.0 in all outstanding classes and that all Incomplete (I) or Deferred (DF) grades will be cleared. If the student does not meet the program or degree requirements, certification will be rescinded and a degree will not be conferred. Graduation from the School of Social Work programs occurs when students meet their program requirements. For Advanced Standing Program students it is 39 semester credit hours and for Regular Program students it is 57 semester credit hours with a GPA of at least 3.0.

13.2. Graduation Ceremonies

The University holds commencement ceremonies at the Breslin Center in May and December. Graduate students from all disciplines participate in this event. It

is a traditional graduation ceremony open to all graduate students who are graduating from MSU that semester. Students finishing their requirements during the summer participate in the May ceremonies. In addition to the University-wide events, the School has its own Recognition Ceremony for graduates held on the morning of the graduate commencement, usually the Friday of finals week. The School ceremony celebrates our graduates and gives students and faculty a chance to meet for a final time as a group. It includes speeches by selected human service community members, faculty and students, a hooding ceremony and light refreshments.

#### 14. Career Counseling and Placement by Faculty and MSU Career Services

The faculty of the School of Social Work have broad career experiences in human services. Their experience is an invaluable resource to our students as they ponder their career and job options. Students are encouraged to seek out faculty members to gain additional insights into social work practice and careers. In addition, as faculty and staff learn of employment opportunities, students are notified through the MSW listserv. Early each spring semester (March), the School hosts a Career Development Day for graduating seniors and MSW students. The topics of the day include but are not limited to licensing, resume and cover letter writing, and interviewing techniques. The MSU Career Services and Placements Center is available to all MSU students. It is located in Room 113 Student Services and its web site is [www.csp.msu.edu](http://www.csp.msu.edu). Career fairs are held throughout the academic year. The College of Social Science employs a field career consultant, Kristi Coleman at [coleman239@msu.edu](mailto:coleman239@msu.edu).

#### 15. Licensing Disclaimer

Michigan State University's Master of Social Work (MSW) programs and its Bachelor of Social Work (BASW) program are fully-accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and designed to meet the State of Michigan's social work licensing criteria. However, MSU cannot confirm whether these programs meet licensure requirements in states other than Michigan. Students who may be seeking professional licensure elsewhere will need to check with the appropriate licensing board in that state to verify that the program meets the requirement for licensure. Each state's social work licensing requirements can be found at: [http://www.socialworklicensure.org/articles/social-work-license-requirements.html - states.\]](http://www.socialworklicensure.org/articles/social-work-license-requirements.html-states.)

#### 16. Conclusion

Social Work is an ethics-based profession. Appropriate use of self is the foundation upon which we build our professional skills at every level, BASW, MSW and PhD. We trust that the material presented in this Student Handbook helps you learn more about professional social work education and the expectations of faculty, staff and the community placed upon social work students and social work professionals. By its very

nature, several sections of a student handbook describe policies and procedures for responding to difficulties students may encounter during their graduate education. However, the great majority of graduate students either do not experience academic difficulty and/or such matters are handled in a non-adversarial approach through joint problem solving. Throughout the students' experience in Graduate School, their strengths and potential should be acknowledged. Graduate students are ultimately responsible for their educational experience and active engagement in learning is encouraged.



# Appendices 1-9

## MSW PROGRAM COURSE GRIDS

