



MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-2025

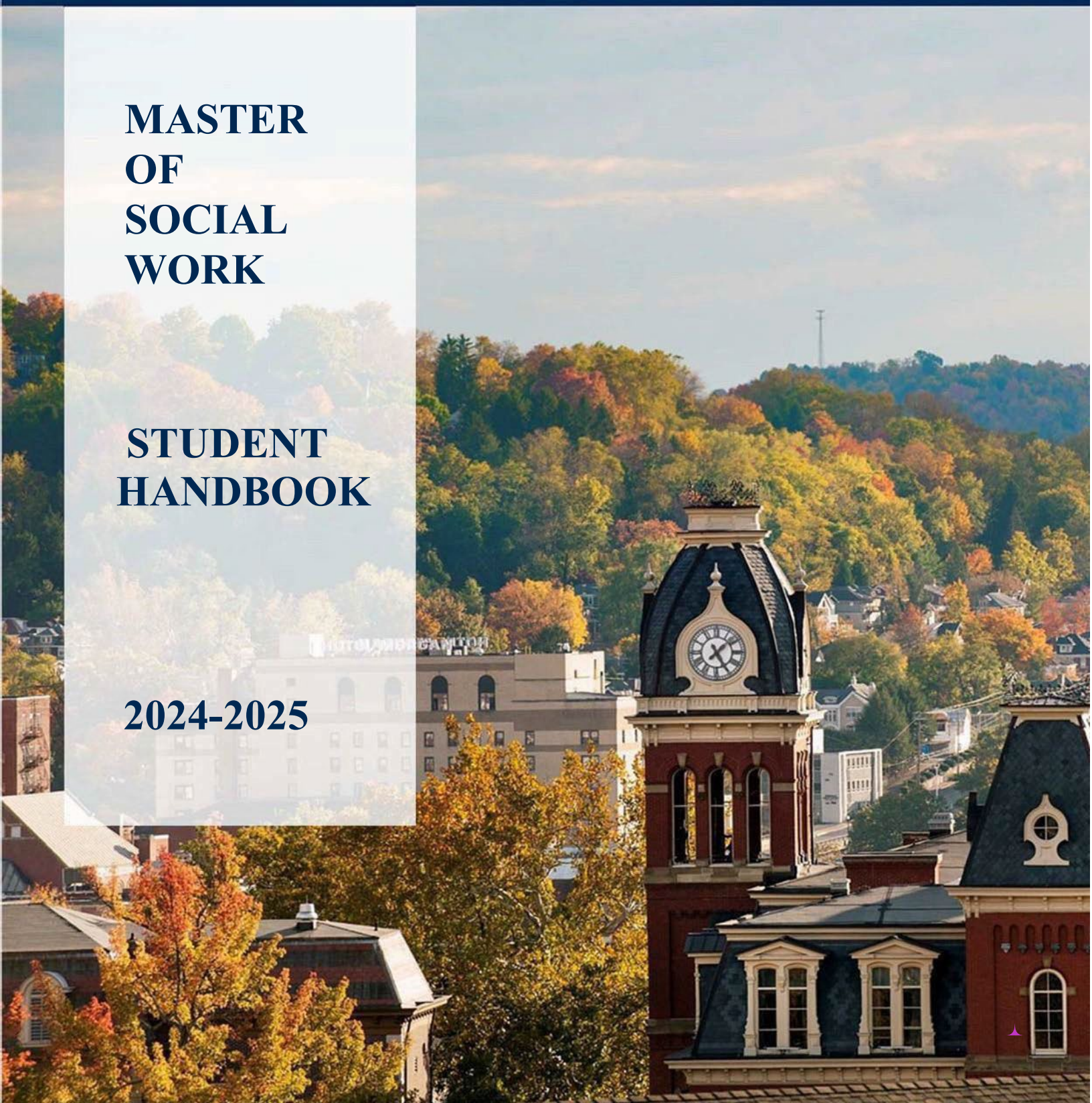


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WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

West Virginia University's School of Social Work began training social workers in the early 1930's. We have been in constant operation since that time. Both the Bachelor of Social Work and the Master of Social Work degree programs are fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). A Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) prepares students for generalist practice, and a Master of Social Work (MSW) prepares students for advanced integrated practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations.

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION STATEMENT

Through teaching, research, and service, the mission of the West Virginia University School of Social Work is to educate students to become generalist social workers at the baccalaureate level and advanced integrated practice social workers at the master's level.

The School of Social Work mission is grounded in the purpose of the social work profession which is to "promote human and community well-being" (Council on Social Work Education [CSWE], 2022, p. 7). Our baccalaureate and graduate programs are "guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry" (CSWE 2022, p. 14). Our programs focus on addressing "social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally" (CSWE 2022, p. 14).

Our BSW and MSW programs are further grounded in the core social work values of service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry. These values underpin curricula and frame our commitment to people and the advancement of social and economic justice (CSWE, 2022).

MSW PROGRAM MISSION

The mission of the MSW program is to educate students to become advanced integrated practice social workers. The specialization in advanced integrated practice builds on generalist practice and prepares students to integrate micro, mezzo, and macro practice skills across service sectors and within interdisciplinary teams to effectively address social and human problems pertinent to a wide range of professional practice areas. Advanced integrated practice provides an integrative approach to social work where students are prepared for both direct practice and administrative roles.

PROGRAM SPECIALIZATION

All students will specialize in Advanced Integrated Practice. The curriculum prepares students to integrate micro, mezzo, and macro practice skills across service sectors and within interdisciplinary teams to effectively address social and human problems across a

wide range of practice areas, with a particular emphasis on effective models of rural service delivery. This update to the curriculum will prepare WVU MSW graduates to be well-rounded, advanced practitioners who can respond to the complex realities of practice in a variety of roles and settings.

The program offers two degree plan options (Regular Standing and Advanced Standing) and two course delivery modalities (on campus and online). Each degree plan can be completed through a full-time or a part-time option, however, the online program is only offered part-time.

Full-time Advanced standing students who have already earned a BSW from a CSWE Accredited University begin in May and complete their degree in one calendar year (12 months). Part-time Advanced Standing and full- and part-time Regular standing students (those who have earned a bachelor's degree in another field of study) start in the fall. Part-time Advanced Standing students finish in the summer after their second year of classes, and part-time Regular Standing students finish in the summer after their third year of classes. Both the BSW and the MSW programs are nationally accredited by the Council for Social Work Education

MSW PROGRAM GOALS

Graduates of the MSW program will be prepared to:

1. Formulate and implement integrated service delivery models appropriate to advanced practice with diverse client populations at multi-system levels.
2. Design and conduct brief and/or on-going assessment and intervention methods consistent with integrated systems and context of practice.
3. Construct an integrated evidence-informed theoretical framework appropriate to the level and context of practice situations.
4. Organize collaboration with other professions to coordinate intervention efforts suitable to the practice situation.
5. Design and conduct collaborative, practice-based evaluation methods and apply findings to improve practice, policy, and/or service delivery effectiveness.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world. Its primary function includes creating professional standards for social work practice, advocating sound public social policies and programs, and providing services to its members. Find out more about NASW at the following website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/>.

NASW offers student reduced membership rates. You may complete an NASW membership application online at <https://www.socialworkers.org/Join>

The West Virginia Chapter of NASW holds an annual conference and hosts special events in which you may be interested. For further information about the West Virginia Chapter of NASW, and for updates on coming events, contact:

WV-NASW
1608 Virginia Street East
Charleston, WV 25311
Phone: 304 345 6279
Website: www.NASWWV.org

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

Introduction & Importance

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics outlines the primary mission of the social work field, the core values of the social work profession, and the ethical principles that all social workers are expected to follow. Abiding by these personal and professional standards at all times is paramount for professional social workers. As such, all students admitted to the MSW program at WVU are expected to follow the Code of Ethics at all times. You can find the NASW Code of Ethics at the following link:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

OTHER HELPFUL LINKS

NASW – National Association of Social Workers: <http://socialworkers.org>

Council of Social Work Education: <http://www.cswe.org>

International Federation of Social Workers: <http://www.ifsw.org>

NABSW – National Association of Black Social Workers: <http://nabsw.org>

PROGRAM STRUCTURE & REQUIREMENTS

DEGREE PLAN OPTIONS

Degree Plan Progression for the MSW

The SSW offers four different degree plan progression options: Full-Time Advanced Standing, Part-Time Advanced Standing, Full-Time Regular Standing, and Part-Time Regular Standing. It also offers two delivery modalities: on campus and online. The online option is available on a part-time basis only. Deviations from the suggested degree plan progression require departmental approval; procedures for this are outlined further in the Enrollment section. Copies of suggested degree progression plans are included in Appendix A.

Full-Time Advanced Standing. The full-time Advanced Standing option is available to on campus students who have earned a BSW degree from a regionally accredited institution within the past 8 years. Students begin courses in the full-time advanced standing program in the summer semester and typically complete their MSW in one year. Students are required to complete 36 total credits of coursework along with the Advanced Field experience. The Advanced Field experience includes 600 contact hours at an approved social service agency, along with monthly field seminars with an assigned faculty field liaison.

Part-Time Advanced Standing. The part-time Advanced Standing option is also available to students who have earned a BSW degree from a regionally accredited institution within 8 years. It is available on campus and online. Course and field experience requirements are the same as full-time Advanced standing. However, part-time students typically complete the program in two years, instead of one.

Full-Time Regular Standing. The full-time Regular Standing option is offered on campus and is open to all students with a bachelor's degree in a field(s) other than social work. It requires students to complete 60 total credits in coursework along with two field placements. Students typically complete the program in two years. Students are required to complete generalist foundation and advanced course work, the Generalist Field experience, and the Advanced Field experience. Students complete a total of 900 direct contact placement hours (300 for Generalist; 600 for Advanced).

Part-Time Regular Standing. The part-time Regular Standing option is open to all MSW students with a bachelor's degree in a field(s) other than social work. It is available on campus or online. Students are required to complete the same number of credit hours in coursework as full-time Regular Standing students, along with the Generalist Field experience and the Advanced Field experience as described above. Students typically complete the program in three years.

DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

Required Courses

Regular Standing:

- **SOWK 513** Social Work Research Methods
- **SOWK 520** Human Behavior in the Social Environment
- **SOWK 530** Professional Identity and Social Justice
- **SOWK 531** Social Welfare Policy and Programs
- **SOWK 540** Generalist Practice I: Individuals, Families, and Groups
- **SOWK 541** Generalist Practice II: Rural Community and Organizational Practice
- **SOWK 581** Generalist Field Experience
- **SOWK 616** Evaluation Research in Social Work
- **SOWK 633** Social Work Policy Analysis, Advocacy, and Deliberation
- **SOWK 643** Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis
- **SOWK 649** Advanced Integrated Practice: Individuals
- **SOWK 650** Advanced Integrated Practice: Families and Groups
- **SOWK 654** Advanced Integrated Practice: Organizational Administration and Leadership
- **SOWK 656** Advanced Integrated Practice: Grant Writing and Financial Management
- **SOWK 682** Advanced Field Experience
- **SOWK Elective 1**
- **SOWK Elective 2**

Advanced Standing:

- **SOWK 616** Evaluation Research in Social Work
- **SOWK 633** Social Work Policy Analysis, Advocacy, and Deliberation
- **SOWK 643** Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis
- **SOWK 649** Advanced Integrated Practice: Individuals
- **SOWK 650** Advanced Integrated Practice: Families and Groups
- **SOWK 654** Advanced Integrated Practice: Organizational Administration and Leadership
- **SOWK 656** Advanced Integrated Practice: Grant Writing and Financial Management
- **SOWK 682** Advanced Field Experience
- **SOWK Elective 1**
- **SOWK Elective 2**

Elective Choices*

- **SOWK 680** Child Welfare Continuum
- **SOWK 675** Addiction and Social Work Practice
- **SOWK 626** Child Mental Health
- **SOWK 627** Advanced Clinical Practice in Integrated Healthcare
- **GERO 645** Fundamentals of Gerontology
- **GERO 681** The Rural Elderly

*Students may take electives other than those listed with the permission of their academic advisor, as long as they have been approved by the MSW curriculum committee.

FIELD EDUCATION

Overview of Field Education

Field Education is an integral part of the professional social work curriculum and requires a close cooperative relationship between the School of Social Work and the selected field sites who accept our students for the placement experience. Field education has been designated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as the “signature pedagogy” and as equal to the coursework in social work higher education. Experiential learning complements the classroom learning and gives the student the opportunity to build a sense of professional competence and identity that serves as a foundation for ongoing professional growth. Field instruction provides the student with an opportunity to test classroom knowledge as well as to develop and refine advanced-practice skills. Students have the opportunity to complete their field placements with agencies throughout West Virginia and adjacent areas. For online students, placements are arranged in their home communities and the seminars are completed online.

The MSW Field Experience requires that regular-standing students complete a 300 contact hours of a Generalist Field Experience either during or immediately following their Generalist coursework in the first year of the program. The MSW Generalist Field Experience provides

the student with opportunities and experiences which demonstrate the multiple and varied roles that social workers perform, as well as the day-to-day operations within social, human and health care agencies, programs and organizations. Full time students must complete an average of 16 hours (2 days) per week at the placement site, during the usual weekday, daytime operating hours of the site, and attend 12 contact hours of seminar during the placement period for a total of 312 hours. Part-time students will complete an average of 12-16 on-site placement hours a week. All required field hours must be completed according to the timelines outlined in the course syllabi in order for students to receive a passing grade.

The MSW Advanced Field Experience typically occurs during MSW students' final year of the program and consists of 600 on-site contact hours plus 12 hours of seminar, at an average rate of 20-24 hours per week, during the usual operating hours of the agency. Part-time students will complete an average of 16-20 hours a week. As with the Generalist Field Experience, all required field hours must be completed according to the timelines outlined in the course syllabi in order for students to receive a passing grade. Students in the Advanced Field Experience are expected to concentrate more intensively and autonomously in levels of intervention for advanced integrated practice. The Advanced Field Experience is meant to prepare the student for entry into social work practice employment, and the expectation is that the student has already grasped the generalist concepts, theories, and roles, as well as appropriate professional behavior.

Decisions regarding the field placement assignment are jointly reached by the student, faculty advisor, and field instruction coordinator. To ensure that our students receive the best possible educational experience in the field, the field office and the SSW do a careful vetting of all field sites. Agencies must be approved by the field office and the SSW before students can be placed there. Employer-based placements are an option for both field experiences and are reviewed and approved by the field office on a case-by-case basis. More information on the field placement process, including the process for approval of employer-based placements, can be found at the following website:

<https://socialwork.wvu.edu/students/field-education/msw-field-experience/forms>.

MSW Program Supplemental Writing Requirement

Students admitted to the MSW program may be asked to complete a supplemental writing requirement either upon admission or during their progression through the program. The goal of the supplemental writing requirement is to offer formal structure, support, and resources to students who have been identified as having deficiencies in their writing quality. Students may be asked to complete this requirement upon admission, as a result of concerns raised by the MSW Committee regarding an applicant's writing quality, or after concerns are raised by instructors and/or their advisor regarding the quality of their writing at any point during their progression in the program. For students who are identified during the admissions process, students will be notified of this requirement in their formal admissions letter and will be asked to complete the writing requirement during their first semester of classes. For students who are identified later during their progression through the program, a student success meeting will be held informing the student that this requirement will be added to their degree plan. In either case, the supplemental writing requirement will be added to the student's degree plan, which is signed by student and advisor.

Students will have one semester to complete the writing requirement after it is assigned. For students

entering the program, this would be their first semester of classes. For students who are already enrolled, this would be the semester *after* the student success meeting is held. Students who do not successfully complete the writing requirement will be placed on academic probation and may be subject to a full academic review.

The requirements of the supplemental writing requirement are as follows:

1. The student must log 3 or more hours with staff at the Eberly Writing Studio in conjunction with an assignment in one of their classes. The assignment will be determined by the MSW committee and/or the student's advisor and should include an in-depth writing assignment that involves some sort of outside research and/or literature review.
2. Students will be required to attend the live Lunch and Learn Seminar presented by Nathalie Singh-Corcoran and Catherine Fonseca on "Writing and Research Skills for Social Work." If students are unable to attend synchronously, they may watch the YouTube video of the presentation instead. After attending and/or watching the presentation, students must complete the associated assignments provided by the instructors.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for admission to the MSW program are outlined on the SSW Website at the following link: <https://socialwork.wvu.edu/students/msw/admissions-requirements>

Admission decisions are decided jointly by the MSW Admissions Committee on a yearly basis. Decisions are based on a holistic assessment of the student's undergraduate (and graduate, if applicable) GPA(s), quality of admissions essay, prior human/social services experience, and letters of recommendation. Just because an applicant meets minimum requirements for admission, does not guarantee acceptance.

Per university policy, applicants to the graduate MSW program must have a minimum overall undergraduate GPA of at least 2.75 for admission. Students with an overall GPA below 2.75 can be considered for **provisional admission**, based on a review of the applicant's transcript(s) and the strengths of the other elements on the application. All provisional admission recommendations are reviewed and approved by the dean's office. Because of student Visa requirements, international applicants are not eligible for provisional admission.

***Provisionally admitted** students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in all courses during their first semester of the program in order to have their provisional status removed. Failure to meet this requirement will result in dismissal from the program per WVU Policies, which are outlined at the following website:

(http://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/graduateeducationatwestvirginiauniversity/#Provisional_Graduate_Students).

Process for Applying to the MSW Program

Instructions for submitting an application to the MSW Program and application deadlines can be found on the following website: <https://socialwork.wvu.edu/students/msw/admissions-requirements>

All applicants must submit the required elements of the application, including the \$60 application fee, by the deadlines specified at the SSW MSW Admissions website listed above in order to be considered for admission.

Applicants who apply by the **priority deadline** are given priority for graduate assistantships and scholarships. The on-campus and online programs typically have different application deadlines each year. Please remember that all required materials must be received and processed by the required deadline dates. Keep in mind transcripts, references, and test scores often take longer than anticipated to arrive.

Information for International Applicants

General information for international applicants, as well as testing requirements for international applicants whose first language is not English, can be found at the following website: <https://graduateadmissions.wvu.edu/information-for/international-students>

ENROLLMENT

Minimum Enrollment

Students are expected to follow their degree plan as outlined and should be continuously enrolled in the required courses for each term as their plan outlines unless they have been granted a leave of absence. Students who wish to divert from their approved degree plan **must have** approval from their advisor and the MSW program director **and** have a formal plan for completion outlined that is agreed upon by the advisor and the student.

In order to maintain active candidacy in the MSW program, students must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 credit hours of coursework, unless granted a leave of absence (described below).

Credit Loads and Limits

Nine credit hours in the fall or spring term and six credit hours in the summer term is the minimum load to be considered a full-time graduate student. Graduate students are not permitted to take more than 17 hours in a term without their college or school and by the Office of Graduate Education and Life. No overload requests will be considered for the summer term. Requests for more than 18 hours in the fall or spring term will not normally be approved. Although students may enroll for up to 17 hours in the summer term, they are strongly discouraged from enrolling in more than 12 hours.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students in good standing who wish to be away from their academic endeavors at WVU for one or more semesters but intend to return at a later date may request a leave of absence from the SSW. Requests for leaves of absence must be submitted in writing to the MSW program director prior to the beginning of the semester during which leave is being requested. After reviewing the request, the MSW director will decide whether or not to approve the leave, the length of time granted, and any conditions required for the student to return. The student is then informed in writing of the decision, and a copy is retained in the student's file. Students who are on a leave of absence typically have an advising hold placed on their account and need to contact their advisor for a meeting prior to returning to the program.

Per university policy, students have 8 years from time of enrollment to complete a graduate degree. Students returning from a leave of absence may apply previously completed coursework to the degree requirements at the time of their return only if all coursework for the degree can be completed within that 8-year time period. For students whose previously completed coursework falls outside of that 8-year time period, they have the option of either re-taking courses or having them re-validated per the university's policies.

After 24 months of not being enrolled in courses (i.e., four consecutive semesters – not including summer semester), students may be made inactive by the WVU Registrar. In order to avoid becoming inactive in the system, students in the MSW program who are on leave must either:

1. Have contacted their advisor and completed a signed degree plan that indicates their plan of continuance *before* the 24 months of inactivity has elapsed, *or*
2. Be enrolled in a class the semester immediately after the end of their fourth semester (not including summers) of inactivity*

**Note: Students on leave will need to have an advising meeting in order to have the advising hold lifted from their account before they can register for classes*

Students who are made inactive by the WVU Registrar must re-apply for admission to the MSW program by the standard deadlines.

Non-Degree Students

Non-degree students include those students taking courses for enrichment purposes, as part of an approved University certificate program, or for continuing education. Non-degree students can enroll in MSW courses pending availability and with departmental approval. If a non-degree student is later admitted to one of the MSW degree programs, a departmental decision will be made regarding whether previous credits earned can be applied to the MSW degree.

Withdrawal Policy

There are two types of withdrawals: withdrawal from individual courses for which a student has registered and a complete withdrawal from the University. Deadlines, procedures, and policies regarding withdrawals are available at the Registrar's website (<https://registrar.wvu.edu/>). Students are encouraged to discuss withdrawals with their advisor and to consider the impact of withdrawals on their required enrollment and degree progress as well as their eligibility for graduate assistantships, financial aid, or full-time international status. After a student withdraws in two consecutive semesters (excluding summer sessions), a student may not register for further work without the approval of the director of the SSW. Enrollment is subject to conditions set by the director.

Transfer Credits

According to the Eberly College of Arts and Science's Graduate Catalog, graduate programs may accept up to 12 credits of coursework completed at another institution and/or as part of a previous degree program at WVU to apply toward the student's current degree plan. Only credits earned within the past 8 years can be applied toward the current degree plan. Courses completed more than 8 years prior to the start of the current degree plan need to be revalidated before they can be applied toward the current degree plan. Non-degree graduate

students are not permitted to transfer credit to WVU from another institution.

For the required social work courses in the MSW degree plan, transfer credit may only be approved for social work courses that are taken in an accredited MSW program. Courses taken outside of an accredited MSW program can be considered only for fulfillment of the elective requirements for the WVU MSW degree.

All coursework completed previously must be reviewed and approved by the School of Social Work's curriculum committee before it can be applied to the current degree requirements. Upon acceptance to the School of Social Work, students who would like to submit a request for transfer credit or to apply previously completed coursework at WVU toward their MSW degree must submit a request to the MSW Program Director. Along with the written request, the student should submit the course syllabus(i) and a copy of their official transcript(s) showing the final grade in the course(s). The MSW program director, along with members of the SSW Curriculum Committee, will review the request and render a decision regarding the acceptance or denial of the coursework credits.

For courses completed outside of WVU, once the course has been approved, the MSW program director completes the [Application for Transfer of Graduate Credit to West Virginia University](#) to the Dean's Office for approval. Once approved, the request is forwarded to the Office of the University Registrar. Transfer credits from other institutions are then applied toward the degree plan requirements for the MSW, but do not count toward the student's GPA. For courses completed within WVU, once approved by the Curriculum Committee, the MSW program director makes the appropriate exceptions in Degree Works to apply the previous coursework to the student's current degree plan.

Life Experience

The School of Social Work does not grant course credit for life or work experience.

Incompletes

A grade of I (Incomplete) is a temporary grade assignment used when unforeseen, non-academic circumstances arise that prohibit students from completing the last course assignments or examinations at the end of the semester. The grade of Incomplete is typically assigned because of an excused absence from the final examination, or because assignments are unavoidably incomplete, as determined by the instructor. Students who are failing a course (exclusive of the incomplete work) may not request an Incomplete.

Students who want to be considered for an Incomplete must apply to their instructor prior to the end of the term. If the instructor agrees, the instructor and the student must negotiate the conditions under which the grade of I will be changed to a letter grade and sign a contract. The date to submit the incomplete work should not be set beyond the last day of class of the following semester. If the student does not complete the terms of contract, then the instructor should submit a grade of F. All incomplete contracts must be filed with the department and Dean's Office. To remove the grade of I, a student does not register for the course again. If the Incomplete grade is not changed by the end of the next major term (excluding summer), the I grade will be replaced with an IF.

TIME LIMITS

Master's degree students are permitted to continue in a program for a maximum of eight years following their term of admission to the program. Students who have been inactive (not registered for any courses) for two or more years or who exceed eight years following their term of admission are required to apply for readmission to the University and the SSW.

Graduate coursework used to meet master's degree requirements must be satisfactorily completed within a period of eight years immediately preceding the conferring of the degree. The rationale for this limit is to ensure that students earning a master's degree have current knowledge (no more than eight years) in their field. Courses completed in the same term as degree conferral (fall, spring, summer) eight years previously are considered to fall within the eight-year limit (for example, a course completed in fall 2018 would fall within the limit for fall 2024-degree conferral). A course completed more than eight years prior to the term of degree conferral must be revalidated if it is to be used toward meeting degree requirements. Revalidation can be accomplished through the following procedure:

- The current instructor of the course determines the method used to revalidate the course. The student may, for example, be required to complete specific activities (such as repeating all or some of the course or completing a set of readings). The instructor then assesses the student's knowledge of course material (through such means as a written or oral examination, a paper, a project, or some other assessment) and determines if the student's knowledge is adequate to justify revalidation of the course.
- The instructor submits a description of the revalidation method and results of the assessment to the college or school dean or designee.
- The college or school dean or designee submits a letter describing the revalidation process and supporting the revalidation to the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs.
- The Associate Provost informs the Office of the Registrar that the course has been revalidated.

APPLICATION FOR GRADUATION/STATEMENT ON AWARDING DEGREES

All degrees are conferred by the WVU Board of Governors as recommended by the faculties of the various colleges and schools. A degree is granted at the end of the semester or summer term in which a student completes all the requirements of the MSW, provided the student has applied for graduation and the MSW program director or the director of the SSW has certified completion of all degree requirements.

For MSW graduates who are interested in applying for licensure, the SSW submits a letter yearly (typically during mid-late March) to the West Virginia Board of Social with a list of MSW graduates in good standing. This can be used as documentation in lieu of a diploma if the student wishes to apply to take the licensure test prior to the graduation date. Students who are graduating at other times of the year or who are seeking licensure in states other than West Virginia should contact the MSW program director directly for required documentation.

A student becomes eligible to graduate when he or she completes the requirements of the University, college or school, and major degree program according to the Graduate Catalog in effect at the time the student first entered WVU, although these requirements are subject to

change at any time with reasonable notice provided to students. With the consent of the student's advisor and dean, a student may choose to meet the conditions published in a later catalog. If a student entered WVU more than seven years previously, the student must complete the requirements in a catalog that is no more than seven years old.

Students must observe any program changes that are enacted by the West Virginia University Graduate Council, West Virginia University Faculty Senate, West Virginia University Board of Governors, West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, or by local, state, or federal law.

WVU will not issue a diploma or a transcript to any student until payment of all tuition, fees, and other indebtedness to any unit of the University is made.

ADVISING & EVALUATION

ORIENTATION

New student orientation for students occurs prior to the beginning of class in the fall (for Regular standing and part-time students) and in the summer (for full-time Advanced Standing students). Online students will be provided access to an online orientation shell prior to the beginning of classes to facilitate the orientation process. During orientation, students are given the opportunity to interact with faculty in the MSW program, learn about program requirements, the field placement/progression process, review relevant policies and procedures related to MSW program. Students also meet with their advisors to review their degree plans, complete forms, and go over any questions prior to the start of field. The field office coordinates separate orientations for both the Generalist Field Experience and the Advanced Field Experience.

COURSE REGISTRATION

The University announces pre-registration dates for graduate students, allowing students time to consult with their advisor and complete the necessary registration process.

Class listing information can be accessed via STAR at <https://star.wvu.edu>. When classes for the semester start, students have a limited amount of time to finalize their schedules. The last day to add/drop a class is usually at the end of the first week of classes. The last day to withdraw from classes is approximately around mid-term. All such transactions require you to notify your advisor. It is your responsibility to register via the web at <https://star.wvu.edu/> and make changes to your schedule or drop any classes by the required deadlines.

ADVISING

Students are assigned a faculty academic advisor, whose job is to assist them in preparing their schedule and registering for courses. This includes completing any necessary registration forms, adding or dropping courses, and requests for credits overloads.

Students will work with the faculty member assigned as their academic advisor to initiate and

review their degree plan. Students should be in contact with advisors at least once a semester to review course planning and registration as well as for any other issues that arise.

DUAL ROLES

Faculty members should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. In instances in which dual relationships are unavoidable, faculty should take steps to protect students and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Examples of instances in which faculty may serve in dual roles with students include serving as a student group advisor, academic advisor, and class/field instructor or as a research, assistantship, or project supervisor and class/field instructor. In order to protect the integrity of the problem-solving protocol for field education, faculty may not serve as both field liaison and field instructor for students. Under no circumstances should faculty engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with students, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The faculty at the SSW is committed to supporting all admitted students in their timely completion of the program. Students are provided regular evaluation of progress through their feedback from individual instructors, academic advisors, and field instructors. Individual instructors provide feedback through academic assignments and individual meetings as needed. The academic advisor is available to discuss with students any areas in which they may be experiencing challenges and/or need additional support (this can include academic coursework as well as field) and should be the primary contact for all academic matters. Students also receive regular formal evaluations from their field instructors, who act as their primary supervisors in their field internships. The purpose of the field evaluation is to highlight areas of mastery, as well as areas for continued learning as students continue to develop their social work practice skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Academic standards for remaining a student “in good academic standing” in the MSW Program include both the student’s GPA and demonstration of professional social work ethics in their course work and field work. Students who do not meet these criteria may be subject to academic review, academic probation, dismissal from the program, and/or other disciplinary consequences. Standards for the required GPA and professional social work ethics are defined below.

GPA

Students are required to have a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 in all MSW courses. Students are required to maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.00 in all MSW courses to be eligible for graduation. Students whose GPA falls below a cumulative GPA of 3.0 may be placed on academic probation, asked to attend an academic success meeting, or to participate in an academic review. Failure to maintain the required GPA may result in dismissal from the

program.

Standards for Academic and Professional Behavior

The primary goal of the MSW program in the School of Social Work is to prepare helping professionals that can provide the highest possible quality of service to their clients, which often include some of the most vulnerable members of society. As such, it is crucial that our graduates adhere to the academic and professional standards required for professional practice and that are described in the NASW Code of Ethics. Because of the importance we place on ethical and professional conduct, admission to the MSW program at WVU does not guarantee continuance, especially if concerns are raised regarding a student's ability to adhere to our standards of academic or professional conduct.

The school has delineated specific policies for intervention and consequences with students for times when there are concerns about academic or professional behavior. These interventions/consequences can include meetings to determine corrective action plans with advisors, field liaisons, and/or field instructors, academic probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

A student's academic performance or conduct may be reviewed, and potentially result in termination from the program, if a faculty member or field instructor expresses concerns about serious and persistent deficits in academic performance or violations of the NASW standards for ethical behavior. Examples of reasons why a student may be terminated from the program include (but are not limited to) the following:

- Failure to maintain the minimum GPA required by the program (3.0)
- Inadequate interpersonal or helping skills
- Violations of client confidentiality
- Sexual or romantic relationships with clients or constituents
- Lack of respect for differences based on gender, sexual orientation, or race/ethnicity
- Inability to keep personal values from interfering with practice decisions
- Substance abuse
- Criminal charges/convictions
- Violence/aggression towards others
- Excessive absenteeism
- Persistent inadequate performance on field or classroom assignments/projects
- Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

Academic Dishonesty/Plagiarism

"Academic Dishonesty" refers to cheating or dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects. It also includes forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters. "Academic dishonesty" in the SSW refers to any of the following:

1. **"Plagiarism"** - The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, including but not limited to, the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by

another individual.

2. “Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects” - Include (but not limited to):

- Giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other assignment for a grade. Depending upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor or supervisor in quizzes, tests, examinations, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments.
- The acquisition or use, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff.
- Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.
- Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to complete assignments unless specifically allowed for per the instructor’s permission.

3. “Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters” - includes, but is not limited to:

- Wrongfully altering, or causing to be altered, any records
- Use of University documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud.
- Presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting records
- Furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another’s work without proper citation furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.
- Providing false or misleading information to gain an academic advantage.

MSW students who engage in academic dishonesty will be subject to one or more of the following academic penalties:

1. Course-level academic penalties: When academic dishonesty occurs within the context of an MSW course (including independent study courses), examples of the penalties the instructor may impose include (but are not limited to):
 - Change in assignment or test grade.
 - A lower final grade, including failure of a course.
 - A final grade of unforgivable failure (UF). The UF penalty can be recommended by the course instructor but must be reported to the appropriate office by the dean of the college or school offering the course after the time limit for a student appeal has expired or the appeal process has been completed, upholding the UF penalty. The student may repeat the course.
 - Required repetition or revision of the assignment or test.
 - Exclusion from further participation in class
2. Other academic penalties. Depending on the severity and context, other penalties for academic dishonesty in the MSW program can include:

- Academic Review
- Probation, suspension, or dismissal from field placement
- Academic probation or suspension from the MSW program
- Dismissal from the MSW program

DISCIPLINARY REVIEW PROCESS

Three Level Review Process

All students are expected to maintain a certain level of academic and professional standards in their coursework, engagement with faculty and other students, and in their field placements. Any behavior that is considered a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics (see Appendix A) is grounds for review within the program, as are any charges of academic dishonesty/plagiarism.

When concerns about a student's academic and/or professional behavior are raised, the SSW follows a three-level review process:

Level 1:

If concerns arise related to academic performance or conduct within the classroom, the faculty member who has concerns should first communicate these directly to the student and work with the student to implement a corrective action plan. They may also notify the student's faculty advisor of the issue and plan. If concerns arise during field placement regarding a student's behavior or conduct, the agency field instructor should first raise these concerns directly with the student and work jointly with the student to implement a corrective action plan. The field liaison may notify the field director as well.

Level 2:

If concerns persist despite the corrective action plan, the faculty member or field instructor should then coordinate a meeting with the student and the academic advisor (for academic concerns) or SSW faculty field liaison (for field-related concerns) to discuss the student's behavior and determine whether the current action plan should be modified or whether the student's case should be referred directly to the MSW committee for either a student success meeting or an academic review (see section below on student success meetings and academic reviews). In cases involving field, the field director may be involved in this meeting as well.

Level 3:

If concerns about the student's behavior persist after the revised action plan determined during the Level 2 meeting has been implemented, the student's case will then be referred to the MSW committee for an academic review (see section on academic reviews). If the concerns are related to the student's placement, the student may not be allowed to continue with placement or field seminar until the academic review is completed. The student may be asked to refrain from attending and/or withdraw from other MSW courses as well.

Student Success Meetings

We recognize that there are many situations that can interfere with a student's academic experience while in the MSW program. The student success meeting process allows us to work in partnership with students to find solutions to these situations. The student success meeting can be used as a part of the

disciplinary review process, but it is also an educational support mechanism to problem solve a variety of situations the student may encounter during the program. Student success meetings are typically initiated by the SSW but may also be requested by the student.

Situations that may warrant a student success meeting include (but are not limited to):

- A student receives a grade below a B in a required MSW course.
- There are concerns regarding academic progress or professional behavior that do not require an academic review.
- Social, financial, or other outside factors are creating barriers to academic success for a student.
- A student wishes to discuss an alternate degree plan and/or leave of absence with their advisor.

In a student success meeting, the student will meet with their advisor and, if needed, additional faculty (such as a course instructor, field instructor/director, and/or program director), to discuss reasons for the student success meeting and resources and supports that will help the student succeed in the future. This may involve discussion of reasons for a student's inability to meet benchmarks in course work, professional behavior, field, or other areas of the program. The advisor, student, and other faculty involved will jointly determine a plan of action and then document this in the student's Degree Works. Additional documentation may also be saved to the student's file.

The student success meeting is intended as a supportive and/or intermediary step to help assist students who are struggling or demonstrate difficulty meeting academic or professional benchmarks. Students who continue to have difficulty meeting the academic or professional standards of the program may be referred to an academic review.

Academic Reviews

An academic review is a supportive process used by the School of Social Work to address situations interfering with a student's academic experience in the MSW program. The academic review process allows us to work in partnership with students to find solutions to these situations. The academic review can be used as a part of the disciplinary review process, but it is also an educational support mechanism to problem solve a variety of situations the student may encounter during the program. Academic reviews are initiated by the SSW.

Situations that may warrant an academic review include (but are not limited to):

- A student's grade point average is below a 3.0;
- There are concerns regarding academic progress or professional behavior;
- Termination from a field placement;
- Social, financial, or other outside factors are creating barriers to academic success for a student.

In situations in which a student's case requires an academic review, the MSW program director will coordinate a meeting time during which the MSW committee members will meet either in- person or via Zoom to review the various information regarding a student's progress in the program and any concerns that have prompted the review. The student will be informed, in writing, of the time and date of the review and invited to attend a portion of the meeting in order to provide the committee with any additional information they feel are important. The student may bring a support person as well. This can be a family member, significant other, or anyone else who the student feels may be a support and advocate through the process.

After the committee reviews the available information and hears the student's statement, it will decide on an action plan to address the barriers that are impacting their progress in the program. The student will be notified of this plan in writing via a letter from the MSW program director within one week of the review meeting. Students also have the right to a copy of the written minutes from the academic review committee meeting.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Probation

Students placed on probation are eligible for continuance in the MSW program and in field placement (if applicable), but remain on a period of academic probation, the length of which is determined by the MSW Committee and/or the MSW Program Director. Assignment of probationary status is contingent upon the student's agreement to follow the specific corrective action plan recommended by the academic success team and/or MSW committee. Failure to follow this plan during the probationary period may result in a second academic review, and/or suspension or dismissal from the program. If the student is unable to return to his or her prior field placement, and the MSW committee's decision is to place the student on probation, the field coordinator will assist the student, if possible, in finding a new placement. Students will be notified of the decision to be placed on probation in writing and a copy of this documentation will be placed in the student file.

Suspension

The student is asked to withdraw from all MSW courses and field placement (if applicable) for a period of time to be determined by the MSW committee. During this time, the student may pursue coursework in other departments at the university or other academic institutions but may not enroll in any additional coursework in the MSW program. Once the period of suspension has finished, a second academic review meeting will be held with the MSW committee in order to determine whether it is appropriate for the student to return to MSW courses and/or field. Students can be suspended from the program in cases in which there has been a prior probationary period, and the student has not followed the corrective action plan **or** in cases in which there is a serious violation of academic or professional standards. Suspension of a student without a previous probationary period occurs with approval of the SSW director, the dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, and the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs.

Dismissal

The student is dismissed from the MSW program and will not be permitted to register for any MSW program courses or field. They can, however, apply and register for other programs within the university. Students can be dismissed from the program in cases in which there has been a previous period of probation or suspension, and the MSW committee decides that the student has not taken appropriate actions to remedy the previous concerns about academics or professional behavior **or** in cases in which there is a serious violation of academic or professional standards. Suspension of a student without a previous probationary or suspension period occurs with approval of the SSW director, the dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, and the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs.

APPEALS

Situations in which students may submit an appeal include, but are not limited to:

- Appeals of final course, including the grade of Unforgivable Failure (UF), if determined by a violation other than academic dishonesty
- Appeals of academic penalties (other than a final grade or based on academic dishonesty)
- Appeals for penalties related to academic dishonesty

Students can find more information regarding academic probation, suspension, and appeals at the following two websites: <https://catalog.wvu.edu/graduate/enrollmentandregistration/#appealstext>; <https://advisingcenter.wvu.edu/academic-probation-suspension-and-appeals>

OTHER POLICIES GRIEVANCES

Students have the right to submit a formal grievance regarding courses, instructors, staff, or another aspect of the MSW program* at any time. The steps for filing a formal grievance follow the guidelines set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics (Standards 2.01-2.11) and are as follows:

Level 1- If the grievance involves an individual faculty/staff member/student, if at all possible, the student with the grievance should attempt to resolve this issue directly with the faculty/staff member /student involved. If the student with the grievance is concerned that addressing the issue directly with the individual involved will cause additional harm and/or retaliation, they can go directly to Level 2.

Level 2- If the issue is not resolved the student is unable to raise the issue directly with the faculty/staff member/student involved, or if the issue is related to another aspect of the program, the student should send a written notice detailing the grievance to the MSW program director. The MSW program director will contact the student, review the information, and determine what corrective action is necessary.

Level 3- If the problem persists, and the student is dissatisfied with the results of the current plan, he/she can file a written grievance with the director of the school of social work, who will review the information and determine a corrective action plan.

Level 4- If the problem persists after consulting with the director of the school of social work, or the student is dissatisfied with the corrective action plan, he/she can file a grievance with the Dean of the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences, who will determine the need for further action.

*Note: If a student's grievance is related to a field-related manner, then they should follow the grievance procedure guidelines outlined in the MSW Field Manual.

HIPAA

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) was enacted in part to protect the security and privacy of individually identifiable health information. Federal law requires every person who will be in contact with a patient's protected health information to have training in the HIPAA Privacy Standard. Because students are covered by West Virginia University's malpractice insurance while they are in their field experience, the School of Social Work and WVU requires that students complete WVU's online HIPAA training annually and renew their certification every twelve months. The training is conducted by an on-line tutorial with quiz, which must be passed with a minimum of 80%.

Students must complete their certification prior to entering field and may take the quiz as many times as necessary until they pass with the minimum percentage but may not begin or continue logging placement hours until successfully passing HIPAA. Students may also be required to take the HIPAA training at their field placement sites.

FERPA

Notice to Students Regarding FERPA

Students at West Virginia University and its divisional campuses ("WVU" or "University") benefit from the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. This Act, with which West Virginia University intends to comply fully, was designed to protect the privacy of education records, to establish the right of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal and formal hearings. A more detailed explanation of rights afforded to students by FERPA can be found at <https://ferpa.wvu.edu/explanation-of-rights>. To view WVU policies regarding FERPA, students can visit this website: <https://ferpa.wvu.edu/>

POLICIES REGARDING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND HISTORY AND CHILD/ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMPLAINTS

Students in a professional social work program are expected to demonstrate the capacity to practice with integrity and within the ethical guidelines outlined within the NASW Code of Ethics. Increasingly, students and employees are required by field placement sites or future employers to undergo a criminal background check, child and/or adult protective services check* and initial baseline and/or random drug screen tests, prior to engaging in field work or employment. Felony convictions and some serious misdemeanors may negatively impact a student's forward progress and/or completion of their academic program as well as future professional licensure and future employment in the social work field. Additionally, open and/or substantiated child and/or adult protective services complaints may impact a student's ability to progress in the program and/or future licensure and employment.

Such information could impact the student in the following ways:

- a. The ability to secure and complete the required field placement experience, as most field placement agencies request criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services checks, and/or random drug screens. Additionally,

in cases where there is a question of potential harm to clients, the School of Social Work has an ethical obligation that prevents the placement of students with open and/or substantiated adult and/or child protective complaints in field work with clients. In these cases, an academic review meeting with the MSW Committee may be required to discuss an appropriate continuance plan for the student.

- b. The ability to be considered eligible for licensure as a social worker by the West Virginia Board of Social Work (WVBSW), which requires that licensure applicants must provide a sworn statement regarding the existence of a criminal history. This is per the West Virginia State Code, which states that certain misdemeanor or felony convictions could preclude the possibility of acquiring one's licensure to practice social work. The ability to be considered eligible for licensure as a social worker in other states in the U.S., per the corresponding state licensure laws.
- c. The ability to secure employment within the social work practice field, as most employers within the social work field require that the applicant either possess or be eligible for a social work license, as well as require criminal background investigations, fingerprint checks, child and/or adult protective services checks, and/or random drug screens as a condition for employment.

*Note: Even if the SSW field placement site does not require one or all of these screenings/checks, a documented substantiated child or adult protective services complaint will disallow students from placement or employment at any West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services (WVDHHR) Office as well as within ANY program, facility, agency, or organization that contracts with DHHR.

POLICY REGARDING ELECTRONICS AND TECHNOLOGY

As the field of technology continues to grow and innovate, social workers are increasingly faced with challenges regarding the ethical use of social media and specific technologies. While the School of Social Work recognizes that, increasingly, students and practitioners utilize various aspects of technology in their schoolwork, social work practice, and daily lives, it is crucial that all students adhere to the ethical principles outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics. As such, the SSW has developed the following guidelines regarding the use of technology in the classroom and in field:

Students should avoid utilizing technologies (such as email, social media and networking, and text messaging) to communicate with clients for personal or non-work-related matters. Students should be aware that posting personal information on social networking or social media sites can create dual relationships with clients and/or confuse boundaries. Students should avoid connecting with clients on social media or social networking sites. Students should avoid posting client information on social media and/or social networking sites.

Students should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, or other forms of technology. Electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, or other personal affiliations may impact the student's ability to work effectively with specific groups.

Students should follow all ethical guidelines set forth in the code of ethics regarding peer-to-peer contact via social media and other technology.

All students should obtain informed consent from clients before utilizing technology-based interventions in practice with them and should be adequately trained in the use of these technologies before utilizing them with clients.

Audio and video recording of classroom discussions are not permitted unless specified as an accommodation for a documented disability through Accessibility Services.

Any use of technology that violates the WVU Policy of Academic Integrity is strictly prohibited.

On-Campus students should avoid utilizing technologies (computers, cellphones, Smartphones, tablets, or other technological devices) for non-class related activities, as this is disruptive to other students as well as instructors. Individual instructors may limit (at their discretion) the use of specific types of electronic devices in the classroom, including (but not limited to) cellphones/smartphones, laptops, and other digital/analog audio and video players or recording devices. Please visit the WVU Acceptable Use of Data and Technology Resources Policy for more information about WVU's policies regarding technology.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

To participate in online learning all students must have access to and proficiency with various technological resources. All students **must have** a desktop computer or a laptop (PC or MAC) with at least 8-16 GB of RAM.

Your computer must also have the following:

- Consistent access to high-speed internet/Wi-Fi/broadband
- Keyboard and mouse
- Speakers and a microphone
- A web camera capable of video web conferencing
- Recent operating system
- Microsoft Windows 10 or newer
- Apple macOS 10.12 or newer
- Google Chrome or Firefox web browser, latest version recommended

Additionally, you must have access to:

- Cell phone or another dual sign-in device (i.e., tablet)
- Scanner/Printer
- Headphones

Computer/Technology Proficiency

It is expected that all incoming students have proficiency with the technological devices listed above. Students are responsible for having computer/technology skills sufficient to accomplish the academic tasks that will be expected of them. Tutorials are available through WVU for the

WVU-specific platforms, such as eCampus. Students must have sufficient ability to operate computers, cell phones, Internet browsers, webcams, and related technology used in the modern workforce. Students should come to class with a willingness to learn new technology platforms to prepare them for a dynamic and evolving professional landscape. Students with disabilities can contact the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) regarding their technology-related needs.

Instructors are not responsible for teaching computer/technology skills within the course. If you do not possess sufficient computer/technology skills, you should gain the necessary training in computer/technology skills prior to applying to the online program.

Examples of essential computer/technology skills include the following:

- Knowledge of computer terminologies, such as browser, operating system, application, software, files, documents, and icon.
- Understanding of basic computer hardware and software with the ability to perform computer operations, such as:
 1. Using keyboard and mouse
 2. Managing files and folders: save, name, copy, move, backup, rename, delete, check properties
 3. Software installation, security, and virus protection
 4. Using software applications, such as Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and email
 5. Knowledge of copying and pasting, spell-checking, and saving files in different formats
 6. Uploading and downloading attachments
 7. Internet skills (connecting, accessing sites, using browsers)
 8. Ability to use online communication tools, such as email (create, send, receive, reply, print, send/receive attachments), discussion boards (read, search, post, reply, follow threads), chats, and messengers
 9. Performing online research using various search engines and library databases
 10. Creating online accounts

OTHER ACADEMIC POLICIES

Academic policies and statements can be found at the [WVU Teaching and Learning Commons](#). It is the student responsibility to review and understand these policies. If you have any questions or concerns, contact your instructor. Policies include but are not limited to the following:

- **Inclusivity Statement**
- **Academic Integrity**
- **Adverse Weather**
- **Incomplete Grades**
- **Sexual Misconduct**
- **University Attendance**

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

TUITION & FEES

We understand that the thought of graduate school expenses can be stressful. However, we have several ways to help you pay for college and make your education more affordable. In fact, WVU is one of the most affordable universities in the nation for both in-state and out-of-state students. Through scholarships, grants, loans, and work-study opportunities, we can help you make your dreams for the future a possibility within reach.

You can determine an estimate of your tuition costs here: <http://tuition.wvu.edu/>

RESIDENCY CLASSIFICATION

Students enrolling at WVU shall be assigned a residency status for admission, tuition, and fee purposes by the Director of Admissions. Admissions and Records base the in-state resident decision on several factors including length of residence in West Virginia, property ownership, payment of West Virginia state property and income taxes, motor vehicle registration, and voter registration. Students enrolled in the online MSW program do not need to establish residency. Online students pay in-state tuition rates regardless of their current state residency.

Reclassification Procedure

Students may request a reexamination of their residency status by completing an [Application for Classification as a Resident Student at WVU](#) with the Office of Admissions. The application will be examined by the Office of Admissions, and the student will be notified of the resulting decision.

To be reclassified for a specific semester, the application must be submitted two (2) weeks prior to the deadline for the payment of tuition and fees. All applications received after the deadline will be considered for the next semester.

Note: Time off from classes due to academic suspension does not count toward residency.

It is the student's responsibility to submit all supporting evidence to be considered with the student's application. No additional evidence or documentation will be considered after the application has been submitted unless it is requested by the Office of Admissions.

Student Accounts/Financial Assistance

For general assistance with student accounts, financial aid scholarships, academic information and federal work-study employment issues, students can submit an online request to the Mountaineer Hub, which can be located at the following weblink: <https://hub.wvu.edu/>.

Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships are offered throughout the university and in the SSW. These include graduate teaching, service, and research assistantships, which are supported by state appropriations, federal funds, private grants, and contracts. Information about available

graduate assistantships is available from students' programs, assistantship supervisors, the Office of Student Employment, and via the online job portal for students (Handshake). The Handshake system is available to all WVU students and alumni and can be accessed at the following link: <https://careerservices.wvu.edu/students/handshake-login>.

Tuition waivers that are associated with Graduate Assistantship (GA) positions based in departments located outside Eberly College of Arts and Sciences **must be** approved by the Eberly Dean's office. To request approval for GA position tuition waivers in colleges/departments outside Eberly, the GA position supervisor must submit a copy of the job description for the position to the Dean's office. These are approved on a case-by-case basis. Approval is decided based on whether the position offers additional "enrichment" of the students' MSW program.

Per university policy, GA positions are available only to full-time, on-campus MSW students.

Students can find out more information about Graduate Assistantships at WVU at the following website: <https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/grad-life/graduate-assistantships>

Students can subscribe to the Student Employment Listserv to receive weekly listings of Graduate Assistantship positions as well as student employment opportunities.
<https://careerservices.wvu.edu/student-employment>

Rural Integrated Behavioral Health Training (RIBHT) Program

The Rural Integrated Behavioral Health Training (RIBHT) program supports MSW students to focus their training on integrated behavioral health practice across the lifespan. Trainees funded under the RIBHT receive \$10,000 in stipend support for completing their advanced field placement within the WVU MSW program. Students interested in participating in the RIBHT program must complete an application after which the finalists will be asked to attend a brief interview with the coordinators of the program. Students can find out more information about the RIBHT program here: <https://socialwork.wvu.edu/research/rural-integrated-behavioral-health-training-program>

Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Project

The Title IV-E Child Welfare Training Project offers tuition and monthly stipends to BSW and MSW students through a grant awarded by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources.

In order to be considered for an award, a student must:

- Be admitted to BSW or MSW Degree Program (on campus or online) and continue to be in good academic standing in the Social Work Program
- Be interviewed by WVU faculty and DHHR representatives.
- Agree to complete a field placement at the WV Department of Health and Human Resources.
- Pass a Criminal Investigations Background (CIB) clearance.
- Have a valid driver's license.
- Be eligible to receive a WV Social Work License

- Complete 9 credits in Families and Children, 3 of which are in Child Welfare

Upon graduation, accepted a position offered by DHHR in any of its state or county offices in the state of WV for an equivalent time as tuition and waiver/stipends were received, or pay back all funds accepted.

IV-E Traineeship Application Process:

Please forward the following to Linda Grandon as shown below:

1. Submit a resume that includes local and permanent address(es) and phone(s), email, anticipated date of graduation, and names and phone numbers of references.
2. A brief personal statement describing your interest in public child welfare social services.

IV-E Project Staff: Linda Grandon – WVU School of Social Work
P.O. Box 6830 – 113 Knapp Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506-6830 304-293-3580, ext. 33580
Linda.Grandon@mail.wvu.edu

Principal Investigator: Jacki Englehardt, MSW, ACSW
Title IV-E Child Welfare Project
WVU – School of Social Work
P.O. Box 6830 – 115 Knapp Hall
Morgantown, WV 26506-6830 304-293-3280
Jacki.Englehardt@mail.wvu.edu

Scholarships & Stipends

Scholarship and stipend awards are also sometimes available to MSW students. These can help to support extra expenses related to academics and/or field. The SSW sends out information to students about available scholarship/stipend awards to students each year along with instructions for how to apply. These are typically awarded each spring, but timelines may vary depending upon the award.

Other Financial Considerations and Resources

Outside Employment

Students are permitted to engage in outside employment during their tenure in the MSW program, and the SSW places no formal limits on the number of hours students may work while in the program. However, it is strongly advised that students discuss their outside employment obligations with their academic advisors to ensure that they are allotting sufficient time to complete their academic coursework and field internship hours.

Additional Loans

Many students use outside loans to fund their graduate education. In order to apply for student loans, students must complete a FAFSA prior to March 1. Students can find out more information about Graduate Loans at this website:

<https://financialaid.wvu.edu/loans#GRLOANS>

FAFSA Info

The first step in securing any Financial Aid is to complete the FAFSA by the federal deadline. You can start that process here: <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

Assistance for Students Experiencing Financial Crisis

The Office of Graduate Education and Life offers one-time emergency grants and tuition waivers for graduate students who face a financial crisis. Visit the Office of Graduate Education and Life Emergency Assistance webpage for information about the Dr.

Robert E. Stetzel Emergency Grants and University Tuition Waivers:

<https://graduateeducation.wvu.edu/finances/financial-support/stitzel-emergency-fund>.

STUDENT RESOURCES

ACADEMIC

WVU Libraries

The WVU Library is an important resource that you will be using during your time in the MSW program. The SSW has a dedicated Social Work Librarian who is available to assist students with using the library, conducting literature searches, and other research-related activities. Students can find out more about the resources available at the WVU Library here: <https://library.wvu.edu/>

Plagiarism Tutorial

WVU offers an online tutorial to help students avoid engaging in plagiarism. The Plagiarism Tutorial can be accessed through the following link: <https://library.wvu.edu/teach-learn>

IT Service Desk

The Service Desk is a support team within IT Services. We serve WVU students, faculty, and staff at all WVU campuses. Staff members are available to answer calls during normal WVU office hours and during extended hours in the evenings and on weekends.

304-293-4444 (Save this number – It may become a number on your speed dial!)

<https://it.wvu.edu/>

ITSHelp@mail.wvu.edu

Writing Assistance

The Eberly Writing Studio, located on the WVU Downtown Campus, G02 Colson Hall
<https://english.wvu.edu/students/eberly-writing-studio>

For additional assistance, visit the SpeakWrite website at the following address:
<https://speakwrite.wvu.edu>, or email questions to: SpeakWrite@mail.wvu.edu

Tutoring

Thinking Storm

Online tutoring, powered by Thinking Storm, may now be available in your online course. Thinking Storm offers browser-based tutoring and features live chat, whiteboard, and file upload functionality. Students may use up to 5 hours of tutoring per course. Online interfaces are optimized for low bandwidth and minimal technical requirements. On-demand 24/7 availability and convenient scheduling options ensure students receive help whenever and wherever they need it, with minimal wait times.

There is also a 24/7 asynchronous Writing Center, providing students with comprehensive feedback, editing suggestions, and additional resources on submitted documents.

Check with your instructor for availability in your class.

APA Resources

In October 2019, the American Psychological Association released the 7th edition of their publication manual. You can order the new APA Manual in either hardcover, paperback, or spiral bound through the APA website: <https://apastyle.apa.org/products/publication-manual-7th-edition>

APA Style Blog

The APA Style Blog is the official companion to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition. It is run by a group of experts who work with APA Style every day.

[APA Style Blog](#)

The Basics of APA Style

This tutorial shows users how to structure and format their work, recommends ways to reduce bias in language, identifies how to avoid charges of plagiarism, shows how to cite references in text, and provides selected reference examples.

[Basics of APA Style Tutorial](#)

APA Sample Paper

The Purdue OWL provides an annotated sample APA paper that illustrates and explains how to format your writing assignment.

[Purdue OWL APA Sample Paper](#)

APA FAQ

Frequently asked APA questions answered by the Purdue OWL. [Purdue OWL APA FAQs](#)

Writing Advice

Strengthening Your Writing Skills: An Essential Task for Every Social Worker

Brief writing tips shared by the National Association of Social Workers [NASW Writing Tips](#)

ORGANIZATIONS

Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO)

The GSWO provides on campus and online students with opportunities to participate in the governance of the School of Social Work and acquire skills that are useful in professional practice. The GSWO is the vehicle by which students are appointed to various Social Work Committees as well as representing the student body's interests to the School of Social Work and its faculty at monthly Faculty Meetings. Follow this link for more information about [GSWO](#).

Phi Alpha

Phi Alpha is an international social work honor society that aims to provide a closer bond among students of social work, promote humanitarian goals and ideals, and foster high standards of education for social workers. Those who are invited into membership are students who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. To be eligible to apply for the Phi Alpha International Social Work Honor Society (Mu Iota Chapter), students must have an overall GPA of 3.8 or above in the master's program. Students who are in the second year of study in the part-time or full-time program or full-time Advanced Standing MSW students who have completed at least 9 credits in their degree program are eligible to apply. Students who are accepted to Phi Alpha receive a Certificate of Lifetime Membership and a medallion to wear at graduation. Other benefits of Phi Alpha membership include recognition for exceptional academic achievement and the opportunity to network with Phi Alpha members nationwide. Instructions about applying for Phi Alpha are typically sent through the student listserv in the fall semester.

STUDENT RIGHTS AND SERVICES

Graduate Education and Life

As a graduate student at WVU, you are a part of internationally recognized academic programs. Students have access to expert mentors and advisors, funding opportunities, and the chance to conduct research and present your findings- all within a welcoming community.

[Graduate Education and Life Website](#)

Division of Equity and Inclusion

WVU provides resources to protect our students and employees from discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. Students can find out more at the following website: [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Website](#)

LGBTQ+ Center

The LGBTQ+ Center offers a variety of programming and resources for students, faculty, and staff at WVU. Trainings as well as event programming can be found directly on their main website (<https://lgbtq.wvu.edu/home>).

The LGBTQ+ Center resources website (<https://lgbtq.wvu.edu/wvu-resource>) also provide more information about specific policies and procedures as well as resources for LGBTQ+ individuals, such as:

- The WVU LGBTQ+ and Gender Inclusive Living Community (True Colors)
- Gender inclusive restrooms
- Legal name changes
- Preferred name requests
- Mental health and financial resources for LGBTQ+ individuals
- LGBTQ+ literature
- And others

Title IX

WVU also provides resources to address sexual assault and power-based personal violence prevention as well as concerns about discriminatory practice. Students can find out more at the following website: [Title IX and Office of Equity Assurance Website](#)

HEALTHCARE

Medical

Basic healthcare is provided by the WVU Student Health Center. Students can find out more information about how to schedule appointments at the WVU Student Health Center on their website: <https://health.wvu.edu/student-health/>

Counseling

Counseling and psychiatry services are available through the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS). Any student enrolled at the university who can provide proof of eligibility and has paid the appropriate student fees is eligible for services. The Carruth Center provides a variety of psychological, psychiatric, and counseling services for a wide range of student concerns. For more information, students can visit the Carruth Center's Website (<https://carruth.wvu.edu/>).

Insurance

Students enrolled in a certain number of credit hours at WVU are required to have health insurance. Students may choose the WVU Health Insurance plan or obtain a waiver

demonstrating they have outside coverage. For more information about WVU Health Insurance requirements and options, students can visit the following website:
<https://talentandculture.wvu.edu/student-insurance/waiver-criteria>

CAMPUS LIFE

Parking

Parking at WVU-Morgantown is limited. A valid parking permit displaying the appropriate parking area number is required from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm, Monday- Friday. If you park in a designated “decals parking lot” without a decal, you will be issued a fine.

The only free parking on campus is in the Coliseum parking lot. A portion of the Mountainlair parking garage offers paid parking by the hour. The garage is located at North High and Prospect Streets. The city of Morgantown offers both long-term parking garages on Spruce Street and Beechurst Avenue and short-term parking at meters.

For more information on parking, please visit the WVU transportation website here:
<http://transportation.wvu.edu/home>

Bookstore

There are WVU Bookstores (Barnes and Noble) located next to the Mountainlair, on the first floor of Evansdale Crossings on the Evansdale campus, and at the Health Sciences Center. Both the Evansdale Crossings and Mountainlair bookstores carry social work textbooks. For more information, go to <https://wvu.bncollege.com/shop/wvu/home>

HELPFUL LINKS

- School of Social Work Main Webpage <http://socialwork.wvu.edu>
 - (304) 293-3501
- Center for Black Culture <https://cbc.wvu.edu/>
 - (304) 293-7029
- Graduate Education Office <https://graduate.wvu.edu/>
 - (304) 293-7173
- International Students and Scholars Services (ISSS) <https://iss.wvu.edu/>
 - (304) 293-3519
- Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusions <https://diversity.wvu.edu/>
 - (304) 293-5600
- Student Family Resources <https://childcare.wvu.edu/>
 - 304-293-5370
- Veterans Programs <https://wvuveterans.wvu.edu/>
 - 304-293-8825

LICENSING AND RELATED INFO

In pursuing licensure, students may be asked to provide copies of their MSW course syllabi. It is recommended that each course syllabus you are given throughout your tenure as an MSW

student be retained. Our experience in attempting to furnish graduates of the MSW program with syllabi for courses taken in the past indicates a definite need for retention of these items. This is extremely important if you plan to take additional courses from other universities in the future.

Below is some information about the process and preparation for taking the social work licensing exam in WV. For those of you considering licensing in other states, please contact the Board of Social Work Examiners in that state for information on their process. A list of the state boards of social work can be found at <https://www.aswb.org/licenses/>

The exam in WV:

The WV Board of Social Work is the entity that administers the licensing exam in WV. There is a lot of information on their website. See:
<http://www.wvsocialworkboard.org/Home.aspx>

The WV Board of Social Work must pre-approve you before you can register to take the exam from the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). This is accomplished by applying for a Temporary License Permit. Information can be found at
<https://www.wvsocialworkboard.org/Licensure/License-Types/Temporary-Permit>

If you are in your last semester of school and you need confirmation from WVU School of Social Work that you are in good standing, direct your request as follows:

- **MSW students:** If you are applying for a WV license, a list of students in good standing, who will be graduating in the upcoming semester, will be sent to the WV Board of Social Work – no further action is needed. (*Note: if you are applying for a license in another state, contact the licensing board in your state and send the requirement details to the MSW Director*). You can take the license exam in your last semester of school before you graduate. However, you cannot receive a regular license (LSW or LGSW) until after you graduate, and an official transcript has been sent to the WV Board of Social Work.
- **MSW grads:** You will be taking the Level B: LGSW (Licensed Graduate Social Worker) License Exam. A Candidate Handbook about the exam can be found at <https://www.aswb.org/exam-candidates/>

Appendix A: Suggested Degree Progression Plans

Advanced Standing (Full Time)

Summer: Year 1		Credits
	SOWK 643 Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis	3
	SOWK 656 Grant Writing and Financial Management	3
	Elective 1: _____	3
Fall: Year 1		
	SOWK 650 Advanced Practice with Families & Groups	3
	SOWK 649 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
	SOWK 633 Social Work Policy Analysis, Advocacy, & Deliberation	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience *†	5
Spring: Year 1		
	SOWK 654 Program Administration and Leadership	3
	SOWK 616 Evaluation Research in Social Work**	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	4
	Elective 2: _____	3
Total Credits		36

*SOWK 682 sections must be taken sequentially. All field placements start in the Fall semester and end in the Spring.

**SOWK 616 must be taken concurrently with the second section of SOWK 682.

†Designated as a WVU Service Learning Course; outside service learning activities are required.

Advanced Standing (Part Time)

Fall: Year 1		Credits
	SOWK 633 Social Work Policy Analysis, Advocacy, & Deliberation	3
	SOWK 649 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
Spring: Year 1		
	SOWK 654 Program Administration and Leadership	3
	Elective 1: _____	3
Summer: Year 1		
	SOWK 643 Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis	3
	Elective 2: _____	3
Fall: Year 2		
	SOWK 650 Advanced Practice with Families & Groups	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	3
Spring: Year 2		
	SOWK 616 Evaluation Research in Social Work*	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	3
Summer: Year 2		
	SOWK 656 Grant Writing and Financial Management	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	3
Total Credits		36

*SOWK 682 sections must be taken sequentially.

**SOWK 616 must be taken concurrently with the second section of SOWK 682.

†Designated as a WVU Service Learning Course; outside service learning activities are required.

Regular Standing (Full Time)

Fall: Year 1		Credits
	SOWK 530 Professional Identity and Social Justice	3
	SOWK 520 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
	SOWK 540 Generalist Practice I: Individuals, Families, & Groups	3
	SOWK 581 Generalist Field Experience/Seminar*†	3
Spring: Year 1		
	SOWK 513 Social Work Research Methods	3
	SOWK 531 Social Welfare Policy and Programs	3
	SOWK 541 Generalist Practice II: Rural Community and Organizational Practice†	3
	SOWK 581 Generalist Field Experience/Seminar*†	3
Summer: Year 1		
	SOWK 643 Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis	3
	SOWK 656 Grant Writing and Financial Management	3
	Elective 1: _____	3
Fall: Year 2		
	SOWK 650 Advanced Practice with Families & Groups	3
	SOWK 649 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
	SOWK 633 Social Work Policy Analysis, Advocacy, & Deliberation	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience *†	5

Spring: Year 2		Credits
	SOWK 654 Program Administration and Leadership	3
	SOWK 616 Evaluation Research in Social Work**	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	4
	Elective 2: _____	3
Total Credits		60

***SOWK 581 and 682 sections must be taken sequentially. All field placements start in the Fall semester and end in the Spring.**

****SOWK 616 must be taken concurrently with the second section of SOWK 682.**

†Designated as a WVU Service Learning Course; outside service learning activities are required.

Regular Standing (Part Time)

Fall: Year 1		Credits
	SOWK 530 Professional Identity and Social Justice	3
	SOWK 540 Generalist Practice I: Individuals, Families and Groups	3
Spring: Year 1		
	SOWK 513 Social Work Research Methods	3
	SOWK 531 Social Welfare Policy and Programs	3
Summer: Year 1		
	SOWK 581 Generalist Field Experience*†	3
	Elective 1: _____	3
Fall: Year 2		
	SOWK 520 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
	SOWK 633 Social Work Policy, Analysis, Advocacy and Deliberation	3
	SOWK 581 Generalist Field Experience*†	3
Spring: Year 2		
	SOWK 541 Generalist Practice II: Rural Community and Organizational Practice†	3
	SOWK 654: Program Administration and Leadership	3
Summer: Year 2		
	SOWK 643 Social Work Assessment and Diagnosis	3
	Elective 2: _____	3
Fall: Year 3		
	SOWK 649 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
	SOWK 650 Advanced Practice with Families & Groups	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience†	3

Spring: Year 3		Credits
	SOWK 616 Evaluation Research in Social Work**	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	3
Summer: Year 3		
	SOWK 656 Grant Writing and Financial Management	3
	SOWK 682 Advanced Field Experience*†	3
Total Credits		60

*SOWK 581 and 682 sections must be taken sequentially.

**SOWK 616 must be taken concurrently with the second section of SOWK 682.

†Designated as a WVU Service Learning Course; outside service learning activities are required.