University of Southern Maine

School of Social Work

MSW Field Work Manual
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Dear Field Students:

Welcome to the Field Education Program of the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Maine! The Field Education Program is a collaborative partnership between the School, University, the community of social and human service agencies, community organizations, public services, and the community of students and social work professionals. As a participant, you must assume an active and responsible role in your field education. Your participation in field work will provide you with the opportunity to apply the theories, skills, and processes learned in classes to real life situations. It will also allow you to test your interest in working with a particular client population, as well as fostering a stronger personal commitment to the social work profession, its ethics, values, and ideals.

Be very serious and dedicated to your field experience. Learning to integrate theory and practice is one of the purposes of your field seminar. Your field seminar assignments will also provide you with opportunities to integrate professional knowledge, values, skills, and competence development. For these reasons, both seminar and field work are taken concurrently and must be successfully completed in order to progress.

The Social Work Code of Ethics is included in this manual and it is required that all social work students read the NASW Code of Ethics Link. Abiding by the values and ethics of social work will assist you as you learn to make sound professional judgments with the support of your field instructor and field faculty liaison.

Please note that this manual may be amended at any time.

We look forward to working with you this year and soon becoming your professional colleagues.

Sincerely,

The Field Office
Section 1: The School of Social Work

The Field Education Program is a collaborative partnership between the School, University, the community of social and human service agencies, community organizations, public services, and the community of students and social work professionals. This Field Education Manual has been developed as a guide to provide information about the nature of field education and the MSW Program and is complementary to the University of Southern Maine's Graduate Catalog, the MSW Student Handbook, and current social work curriculum materials concerning the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program.

Mission and Diversity Statements

Mission Statement
The University of Southern Maine’s School of Social Work is committed to educating culturally competent social work practitioners who are prepared for multi-level, strengths-based practice that values social justice, and the centrality of community and environment in enhancing the well-being of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Diversity Statement
Commitment to diversity is an integral part of the School of Social Work's mission. The School of Social Work faculty and staff are committed to preparing culturally competent social work practitioners. We welcome and honor people of all ages, abilities, creeds, cultures, genders, races, sexual orientations, and socio-economic statuses. We value intellectual curiosity, pursuit of knowledge, academic freedom, and integrity, and vigorously promote a safe atmosphere where ideas can be presented and challenged in a mutually respectful manner. We promote values of social justice and social change, and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice through partnership with the community and in our teaching, scholarship, and service endeavors.

Guiding Values

● Dignity and worth of the person
● Importance of human relationships
● Building knowledge through open inquiry
● Competence
● Integrity
● Social Justice
● Service
Standards for Professional Practice

Students are expected to have knowledge of, and to adhere to, the NASW Code of Ethics which outlines the behavior and responsibilities expected of professional social workers. Under the NASW Code of Ethics, students studying for their MSW degree are considered to be social work professionals and are subject to the NASW Code of Ethics. Students are expected to read the Code of Ethics link.

Self-Awareness, Self-Assessment and Self-Monitoring
You are expected to make a commitment to learning about self-awareness and to using self-reflection consistently and genuinely. Accepting supervision and incorporating feedback are critical to this process. As you progress through the MSW program, you are expected to accurately assess your own strengths and limitations and to display a willingness to examine and change behaviors that interfere with your work at a field placement or in the classroom. Included in this is a willingness to diligently examine and address your own biases.

Openness and Willingness to Learn - Flexibility and Adaptability
As an MSW student, you are expected to demonstrate openness to, and active engagement in learning new ideas and perspectives. You should actively seek to understand the worldview and values of others. As required by the demands of professional practice, you should be flexible and adaptable in new situations and as circumstances change.

Interpersonal Skills
You are expected to demonstrate the interpersonal skills and capacities needed to relate to clients, agency colleagues, fellow students, faculty, and staff. The capacity and skills to actively engage with others across difference and in situations of conflict should improve and deepen as you progress through the MSW program.

Communication Skills
In all oral, written and electronic communication you are expected to be respectful of others. In electronic communication you should adhere to professional boundaries. In the classroom, you are expected to take responsibility for your role in discussions. You should strive to use active listening skills and to express ideas clearly. You are expected to self-monitor and not dominate a discussion. Increasingly, as you progress through the program, you should be able to communicate effectively in writing, both in classroom assignments and in your field placement. As an MSW student, it is your responsibility to utilize resources to improve academic and field performance when problems in communication have been identified and brought to your attention for remediation.

Critical Thinking Skills
As you progress through the MSW program, you are expected to be able to frame and address problems in a disciplined way and engage at greater levels of independence in problem solving efforts. Increasingly, your problem-solving efforts should be well reasoned, examine multiple perspectives and worldviews, integrate evidence and knowledge, and lead to well-supported decisions and conclusions.

Presentation of Self
Upon entry to the program, you are expected to commit to learning what is required for professional behavior. Professional behavior includes the ability to evaluate and respond to the demands and expectations of classroom and field placement environments, and the larger University community. Professional behavior also includes being punctual, dependable, and accountable and being able to prioritize responsibilities. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor can reflect professional behavior.
**Self-Care**

You are expected to recognize your own current life stressors and to seek ways to mitigate the effect of these stressors on your academic and field performance. In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics (sec 4.05), social work students should not allow their own personal problems or issues to interfere with their judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have professional responsibility. Social work students whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their judgment and responsibilities should immediately seek consultation with a faculty advisor, faculty member, or supervisor who will determine and assist in the necessary steps and actions related to field placement and course work.

Acknowledgements: School of Social Work University of Texas, Austin, Hunter College School of Social Work

**Section 2: CSWE Core Competencies**

The goal of the MSW program in the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Maine is to educationally prepare students for **advanced social work practice**. Grounded in a commitment to professional ethics, social and economic justice and the empowerment of client systems, advanced social work practice builds upon the generalist social work practice model and the 9 core competencies, which are outlined in the *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (2015) of the Council on Social Work Education:

1. **Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

2. **Engage diversity and difference in practice.**

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power.
3. Advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.
Social workers understand that every person, regardless of position in society, has fundamental human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice.

5. Engage in policy practice.
Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

7. Assess with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making.

8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

9. Evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

Chapter 2: Field Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for all higher education schools of social work in the United States. The goal of the CSWE is to ensure that all students who earn the title of Social Worker have met the same standards of quality for professional practice. The CSWE sets the tone and requirements for field education and all other components of MSW programs.

According to the CSWE:

“The intent of field education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with the practical world of the practice setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum — classroom and field — are of equal importance within the curriculum, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria by which students demonstrate the achievement of program competencies”. (CSWE) Link.

Additionally, the CSWE requires that MSW students complete both a generalist field education experience that allows students to learn and demonstrate CSWE core competencies (e.g., utilizing ethical principles to conduct practice) and an advanced field experience that allows students to demonstrate competence in advanced generalist or clinical environments. CSWE further establishes guidelines that accredited schools of social work must follow in terms of:

- Selecting field placement settings.
- Monitoring students while on-site.
- Maintaining communication between the university and the field placement site.
- Evaluating student progress.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the field settings.
- Determining the criteria of qualified field instructors.
These guidelines ensure that, regardless of where in the country students are earning their MSW, they are receiving a consistent, high-quality experience in the on-the-job portion of their social work training.

Section 1: Field Education Overview

The USM School of Social Work embraces field education as the signature pedagogy of the profession. This competency-based education is critical to the successful development of the social work practitioner. The field curriculum supports the mission and goals of the MSW program and the values of the social work profession, including social and economic justice and respect for diversity and focuses on advanced social work practice.

Field education is a central component of the MSW curriculum, providing the necessary opportunity for students to apply and integrate classroom learning with actual practice. The practicum presents students with a range of learning opportunities in order to facilitate his/her/their application of theories and skills in a supervised agency situation. The MSW program offers two field practicums aimed at enhancing, promoting, maintaining, and restoring social functioning in the community. Across the two semesters of foundation year, students complete 480 hours of field (240 hours per semester/3.5 credits per semester). Concentration year (second year) field consists of 600 hours across two semesters (300 hours per semester/4.5 credits per semester).

Foundation year students assess needs and resources, provide basic direct and indirect services, obtain services, and improve service delivery systems. The MSW first year practicum is a foundation for the second year, preparing students for generalist entry-level practice. The second year practicum or concentration year is a placement that provides the opportunity for students to apply specific interventions from various models of treatment in their practice with individuals, family, groups, communities, and organizations. Drawing from the relationship between micro and macro practice, the practicum allows students to deepen and extend their assessment and intervention skills. The focus supports practice with individuals, families, and groups that establish their unique situation within a cultural and community context. And, conversely, experience at the community and organizational level includes and respects the individuals, families, and groups affected.

The policies and procedures outlined in this manual are guidelines intended to:

- Enhance the quality of learning that occurs during field placement
- Support the effective use of field education as part of the School of Social Work MSW mission, program goals, and curriculum.
- Establish standards consistent with the Council on Social Work Education policy, USM graduate education, and the NASW Code of Ethics.

The guidelines suggested should not supplant professional judgments nor become constraints to the creative use of experience in guiding field learning.

Section 2: Role Titles and Descriptions

A valuable and successful student field experience requires the involvement of many people including the student, those at the field agency, and the School of Social Work. This section defines the titles used when referring to participants in the field practicum.

Field Work Coordinator: The Field Coordinator has the overall administrative responsibility for the direction and coordination of the field education program.
Field Faculty Liaison: The Field Faculty Liaison who teaches the MSW field seminar class (SWO 554/555 & 654/655) and assists students and field instructors in obtaining and maintaining quality-learning experiences in field practicum. This person serves as a liaison between the University and the agency site.

Field Instructor: The agency supervisor. Every field student is assigned a MSW field instructor who has the responsibility for providing educational guidance to the student in meeting the learning objectives and other requirements for study. Based on the standards established by the Council on Social Work Education for field study, Field Instructors for MSW students must hold a MSW from a CSWE accredited institution. In programs where a field instructor does not hold a CSWE-accredited MSW degree, other options are explored to find an external qualified MSW field instructor. An external field instructor shares all the responsibilities of a regular field instructor, except orienting the student to the agency and giving daily assignments. When an external field instructor is needed, a Site Supervisor is assigned by the agency to provide day-to-day support to the student. Currently, the School of Social Work and field agencies share the responsibility of enlisting a consulting MSW-level field instructor to provide the regular weekly supervision for our students.

Responsibilities of the field instructor during the fieldwork experience include the following:

- Provide student with a general orientation to the field agency.
- Describe the history, philosophy, and goals of the agency.
- Interpret the agency’s organizational structure and governing body, staffing pattern, funding sources, and interface with other agencies.
- Describe the situations of clients served, services offered, eligibility requirements, and sources of referrals.
- Arrange a tour of the facility and introduce agency personnel.
- Make available knowledge of agency resources such as in-service training and community seminars.
- Explain relevant agency procedures, forms, and requirements as defined in policy manuals.
- Provide other information as related to assigned work area and specific tasks (e.g., work schedule, documentation procedures, confidentiality laws, dress requirements, time planned for supervisory meetings, etc.).
- Assign learning activities for the student that include a variety of practice experiences and provide a wide range of meaningful encounters with the social service delivery system. Student assignments during placement must be developed according to the goals and objectives outlined in the student field manual and align with the CSWE competencies and behaviors. Initial assignment of cases and projects should be made as soon as possible so the student immediately feels involved and productive.
- Each student will be expected to develop, in consultation with the field Instructor, a learning agreement for his/her/they semester of field study.
- Provide ongoing consultation to the student concerning field assignments.
- Schedule weekly supervisory meetings (minimum of one to one and one-half hours).
- Provide ongoing feedback to the student concerning their performance in the field.
- Maintain contact with the School’s field faculty liaison or to monitor student progress.
- Attend (when possible) field workshops/trainings and meetings scheduled on campus before and during the placement semester.
- Complete and submit a field evaluation of the student’s performance.

Site Supervisor: Specifically, the site supervisor (the professional person the agency designates to provide
day-to-day support for the student) when there is not a MSW on site:

- Provides the student with a general orientation to the field agency.
- Identifies and/or designs learning assignments for the student in consultation with the external field instructor.
- Reviews, modifies (as needed), and signs the student’s learning agreement.
- Provides daily supervision/consultation to the student concerning fieldwork.
- Schedules weekly supervisory conferences with the student to provide his/her/their assistance in planning, managing, and completing field assignments.
- Provides ongoing feedback to the student concerning his/her performance in the field.
- Maintains contacts with the external field instructor and field faculty liaison to monitor student progress.
- Consults with the field instructor about the student’s performance.
- Arranges for the external field instructor to review, modify (as needed), and sign the evaluations of the student’s performance before submitting it to the field faculty liaison.

Section 3: Student Responsibilities

The importance of the student’s responsibility for achieving a successful field placement cannot be over-emphasized. Along with faculty field liaisons and agency personnel, each student is expected to function as an equal, assertive, and active partner in planning, carrying out, and evaluating field education activities. Therefore, students participate in selecting a suitable placement, developing the learning agreement, meeting the objectives and goals for field education, and participating in all decisions related to requirements for field work. The student is also expected to:

- Have personal health and insurance coverage or enroll in the USM health insurance program, in accordance with a university, before beginning field placement.
- Understand and meet the requirements for field education (e.g., attendance, arriving and leaving the agency at the agreed upon time, notification of absences, seminar assignments, etc.), adhere to policies and procedures of the placement agency, and comply with guidelines described in this Manual. In addition, each student is expected to follow placement requirements described in the Student Affiliation Agreement.
- Students are expected to transfer the theoretical concepts, principles, and skills acquired in the classroom to field practice situations to receive a passing grade in field education.
- Complete field narratives and/or process recordings and submit to faculty field liaison.
- Develop a learning agreement with the field instructor and complete all field assignments. The student should submit the learning agreement to the faculty field liaison.
- Schedule a weekly one to one and one-half-hour supervision with the field instructor for direction in planning, managing, and completing fieldwork assignments. The student should prepare an agenda before each scheduled supervision meeting.
- Participate with the field instructor and site supervisor (when assigned) in the development of a field evaluation of student performance.
- Submit a written evaluation of the field education experience (Student Assessment of Field Placement) to the field faculty liaison and field department by the designated date near the end of the 1st semester of placement.
- Submit completed attendance sheets to the field faculty liaison at the end of each semester of field placement.
- Demonstrate a commitment to ethical social work practice as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics by applying social work values and ethics in all practice situations.
● Inform clients of their status as social work interns (as dictated by the NASW code of ethics).
● Be receptive to supervision and use it to improve practice skills and knowledge, increase self-awareness, and develop professionally. Therefore, as needed, students are responsible for meeting with Field Instructors, Site Supervisors (when assigned), and Faculty Field Liaisons for guidance, clarification, and assistance in completing assignments and to discuss other matters related to their fieldwork.
● Pursue resolution of problems that arise during placement through proper channels. Students should share all problems with appropriate agency personnel and/or Faculty Field Liaison. Preventing or resolving problems frequently requires that a student take the initiative to interact with, question, give feedback, and constructively confront others when it appears that the educational objectives and other field requirements are not being met.
● Participate in the Evaluation Process: Evaluations of the student’s progress and performance during the placement are completed by the Field Instructor and the Site Supervisor (when assigned) at the end of each semester. *Each student is expected to participate in the formal evaluation process.*

**Chapter 3: Field Work**

**Section 1: Field Placement Application Timeline and Process**

This section walks through the steps necessary to be placed at a field agency. Students should familiarize themselves with the steps and the placement process.

The majority of the agencies in the program have had a long association with the University of Southern Maine School of Social Work. The school continues to expand and nurture relationships with these field sites. *It is the policy of the School of Social Work that all referrals of students to fieldwork sites must be made by the Field Coordinator. Students may provide a suggestion about a field site, but may not pursue a placement on their own. Field placements independently obtained will not be approved.* Students are expected to maintain communication with the Field Coordinator throughout the placement process especially if there is difficulty getting in touch with an agency or if there are any concerns or questions. This section walks through the steps necessary to successfully secure a field placement. All students must follow the Field Placement Application process.

**Timeline for Placement of Students:**

- **Full-Time and Part-Time Regular MSW Program students entering their concentration year AND Part-time Advanced Standing entering their 2nd year:**
  - **January 15th** – Deadline for Field Applications (students will be notified when applications will be available)
  - **January/February** - Students schedule interview with the Field Coordinator to review their field application and resume, discuss social work interests, identify 1-2 potential placement sites, and discuss the referral process.
  - All placements must be secured no later than **April 15**.
  - **Early April** - Register for SWO 654 Field Experience & Seminar III **AND** SWO 651 Practice IV Individuals OR SWO 603 Practice III Groups (These courses run concurrently with field work)

- **Newly Admitted MSW Students – Full-Time Regular (2-year program) and Advanced Standing (1year)**
**Step 1: Field Application**

Students complete and submit a field application and their updated, through the Field Database, to the field coordinator early in the spring semester prior to the beginning of the field placement practicum the following fall. The field coordinator will email students with field application instructions and link to the field application. The application must be fully completed and submitted by **January 15 and February 15 (please see Timeline for Placement of Students above)**. This application is an essential part of the process, and placement efforts cannot be initiated without the application and resume. The timely submission increases the opportunity for placements in preferred settings. Students interested in a field placement at their place of employment should indicate this on the application and discuss this option with the Field Coordinator during the interview. Please see Employment Based Field Placement Policy in the policy section of this manual. Students with disabilities should indicate on the application whether they require support services or other accommodations in order to perform course and field work effectively.

**Step 2: Interview with the Field Coordinator**

Once the application is received, the Field Coordinator will review the application and resume and prepare for an in-person interview with the student. This interview will initiate the start of the placement process providing the student information necessary to prepare for their field placement interviews. In preparation for this initial interview, students will be given access to the Agency Profiles Database, located in Blackboard - MSW Field Practicum, to review and make a list of placements of interest in the geographic location desired to discuss during the interview with the Field Coordinator. **Please note:** while we attempt to keep our Agency Profiles current, we cannot guarantee an agency posted will be available for placement every year. The Office of Field Education cannot guarantee that students will be placed in their preferred settings.

**Placement Considerations**

Factors considered in selecting a student for assignment to an agency placement include:

- The student’s expressed interest and future career plans.
● The student’s work and volunteer experience in social service agencies.
● The student’s specific educational needs (learning style, structured vs. unstructured setting, etc.) as perceived by the School.
● The fit between the student and the Field Instructor and the student’s potential to function well in a particular agency setting.
● The agency’s ability and willingness to work with a particular student.

Step 3: Student Referral

Once 1 - 2 agencies have been agreed upon, the Field Coordinator will email a referral to the agency contacts, copying the student in the email. Timeliness in outreach to the agency is critical in securing a field placement. Students are directed to email their resume and cover letter to the agency contact person within three (3) days of the referral.

Students are encouraged to send a follow-up email reminder to the agency and the Field Coordinator after 1 week (not including weekends) of initial contact if the referring agency has not responded. After 2 weeks of no response, students should contact the Field Coordinator.

Step 4: Field Placement Interview

Students are screened for interviews by agencies based on the field coordinator referral, student resume, and cover letter. An invitation to interview for an internship should be treated like an employment interview. Students should be professional, dress appropriately (business casual attire), research the site, go to the interview with a copy of your resume, and be prepared with a list of questions about the placement or agency. Students are expected to send a thank you email after interviewing.

An interview does not guarantee a placement. Many sites are selective and the process can be competitive. In addition to USM students, sites are interviewing students from many programs and Schools of Social Work.

Students are encouraged to accept a field placement if it is offered. When accepted, the student sends an email to the second field placement referral politely thanking them for their consideration but another placement has been accepted. Students must not decline a placement offer without first consulting with the Field Coordinator.

Where a student is simultaneously offered a placement from two sites, it is the student’s responsibility to make a decision about which offer they will accept and then to respond professionally declining the other offer. This must be done in a timely fashion so that sites may continue their search. Students should be in communication with the Field Coordinator about their placement process and decision or if there are questions or concerns.

Step 5: Field Placement Confirmation

Once a field placement has been accepted, the student must provide the Field Coordinator the agency Field Instructor’s name (MSW providing supervision), email address, and address of the field placement location (Some agencies have more than one site location). A letter of Field Placement Confirmation will then be emailed to the Field Instructor and student.

Step 6: Preparing for the Field Placement

At the end of the spring semester or early summer, students are advised to contact their field instructors to schedule a time to meet to discuss the start date for the field placement in the fall, determine placement hours or schedule, and complete any agency required paperwork. Field placements typically begin the first week of classes in
the fall and end in early May when classes end. Across the two semesters of foundation year, students complete 480 hours of field (240 hours per semester/3.5 credits per semester). Concentration year (second year) field consists of 600 hours across two semesters (300 hours per semester/4.5 credits per semester).

Background Check, Fingerprinting, & Other Pre-Placement Fees
Many field placement agencies require fingerprinting, criminal background check, and other pre-placement fees. All pre-placement fees are the responsibility of the student if not covered by the field placement agency.

Pre-Placement Training Policy
When field placement sites require training prior to the start of an internship and field seminar class, students may participate and count such training hours toward their yearly total. They are still expected however, to remain in their field placement for the entire academic year, but may alter their weekly hours accordingly if necessary and with the approval of the field faculty liaison and field instructor. Training may not include client contact.

Change of Placement
Once a field placement has been accepted no student has the authority to resign from a field placement. Change of a field placement site anytime requires the approval of the Field Coordinator. While the field department makes every effort to ensure compatibility between the student and the placement site, there may be times when there is an imperfect fit. When this occurs, the following steps should be taken:

1. The student and field instructor meet to discuss the situation and to determine a solution.
2. The field faculty liaison is informed of the problem and will make efforts to resolve it.
3. In the event that the field faculty liaison is unable to rectify the situation, the student and the field liaison contact the field coordinator to arrange a meeting.
4. The student and field faculty liaison meet with the field coordinator to discuss the factors that led to a need for a placement change, and alternative placement options may be explored.
5. Some situations may require an academic review.

Additional Field Information
If a student is not able to successfully secure a placement after interviewing with three potential placements, an in-person meeting will be scheduled the Field Coordinator to discuss the process, assess the student's readiness for field work, review how the student approached the interview process, and share any feedback offered by agencies. The goal of the meeting will be to determine the next steps in the field placement process. A possible outcome of the meeting could be one additional referral. If the student is not successful with the 4th interview an Academic Review will be scheduled to determine suitability for the social work field, deferment of field work until the following year, or withdrawing from the MSW program. Outcomes would be determined on a case-by-case basis. The Academic Review will include the MSW Coordinator, the students’ Social Work Faculty Advisor, and the Field Coordinator.
Section 2: During the Field Practicum

Field Practicum Purpose

The field practicum is an integral part of preparing the student for generalist practice. Through this experiential learning, students have the opportunity to integrate theory with the realities and demands of professional social work.

Monitoring and Assessment of Students' Progress in Field Placement

The review of each student’s progress is ongoing. The student registers for a section of SWO 554 (fall) and SWO 555 (spring) or SWO 654 (fall) and SWO 655 (spring), the seminar instructor of which serves as the Field Faculty Liaison. The Field Faculty Liaison’s role is to assist the student in integrating the educational program of the School, to monitor the field and class (field seminar) experience, to assist and guide the student regarding resources, and to evaluate the learning process in conjunction with the student and the field instructor. Monitoring of students is the joint responsibility of the School and the placement site. The review of each student’s progress by field faculty liaison is ongoing, which is in keeping with educational principles enunciated by the University. It is the student’s responsibility to make and keep appointments on a regular basis, attend classes, and present specific concerns and issues.

There are a number of structures that facilitate this monitoring process:

- The initial admission process and interview with field coordinator;
- Faculty-student discussions which occur throughout the semester;
- Contacts between field instructor and field faculty liaison;
- Review of selected field assignments;
- Discussions between field faculty liaison, faculty advisors, and the field coordinator which occur when there are special issues or concerns about a student’s progress; and
- Preparation of the student field evaluation (mid-year and end of the year field evaluations)

Methods of Assessment Utilized by the School and Placement Site

The methods that the field faculty liaison utilizes to monitor students’ progress in the placement are as follows:

- Students’ participation and performance in field seminar (fall semester).
- The use of written assignments such as the learning agreement, narratives, supervisory agendas, and other assignments.
- Individual meetings between field faculty liaison and student as needed.
- Field site visits and communication between the field faculty, student, and field instructor.
- Field faculty liaison phone or email “check-ins” with agency field instructor.
- The use of mid-term check-in, end of semester, and end of year written evaluations.
The field instructor monitors the student in the placement through various means, including but not limited to:

- Direct observation of student activities.
- Narratives.
- Learning agreement and evaluations.
- Weekly supervisory sessions including students’ agendas.
- Feedback from other agency personnel.
- Student performance in professional meetings within the agency.
- Client feedback.

Field Seminar

The field work seminar in the fall semester, which is taken concurrently with the field placement, is the primary mechanism that facilitates students’ integration of classroom content with work in the field. Students secure placements in a variety of settings. By sharing their experiences in field seminar, students enable others to learn about the various fields of practice and the social service delivery system. Through this peer learning model, students develop knowledge about the resources and the range of social welfare policies and programs. Seminar discussions and assignments reinforce the concept of advanced social work practice as students come to understand that social work skills and knowledge can be used effectively with diverse client systems in all fields of practice. The seminar structure creates a supportive environment in which students can process their experiences in becoming advanced practitioners. Because a primary focus of the course is student sharing of field experiences with one another, students are expected to arrive on time, attend the entire class, and be prepared as participants to listen and support classmates in the learning process. The collaborative development of group norms and social work practice values include the following:

- Attendance at all seminars except for circumstances that have been discussed with the field faculty liaison prior to the seminar.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- Arrival to class on time.
- Equitable distribution of seminar time among all members.
- Respect for different levels of individual assertiveness in class participation.
- Creation of space and safety for all students to join in the group process.
- Respectful attention to class members who are speaking.
- The use of “I” rather than “you” statements.
- The absence of any disrespectful language regarding race, ethnicity, color, socio economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, disability, family structure, relationship status, national origin, religion, and mental health issues.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Student learning, in accordance with the 9 core competencies are evaluated through journals, process recordings/narratives, other written assignments, and field seminar participation. Students are required to be active participants in the seminar both in sharing their field experiences and serving as consultants with their peers. Given the nature of the seminar, student learning is exposed, explored, and supported. Students often raise issues related to how effective agencies have been in providing meaningful learning experiences and supervision.
During the academic year, students are asked to complete an Assessment of Field Placement, which offers them an opportunity to provide feedback about the strengths and challenges of the agency as a field placement. This assessment is given to the Field Coordinator.

The evaluation of a student’s field practicum performance is intended to be a continuous process that encourages reciprocal mutual participation between student and field instructor. The process culminates in the completion of a written Mid-Semester Progress Update in the Fall and an electronic evaluation at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters.

The purpose of the Field Evaluation is to obtain information about the student’s performance from the field work instructor. It requires the field instructor to assess the student’s performance in the areas of skill development and competency (with particular emphasis on the nine core competencies and corresponding behaviors). In evaluating the student, field work instructors are expected to consider the following:

- the learning agreement (prepared by student in collaboration with the field instructor);
- direct observation by the fieldwork instructor;
- the student’s views concerning his/her/their progress;
- written work;
- feedback from other agency staff;
- meetings between student, faculty field liaison, and field instructor.

The evaluations for each of the two semesters serve different functions. The fall semester evaluation identifies the student’s strengths and learning needs at the midpoint of the field experience. The evaluation focuses primarily on assessment of the student’s adjustment to the agency, skill development, the appropriate use of supervision, the degree to which the student has developed an awareness of her/his/their learning needs, and whether the student has acquired a working knowledge of the agency itself and the community it serves.

The spring semester evaluation provides a detailed review of the student’s progress over the course of the entire year, centering primarily on how successfully the student has acquired the skills necessary to function as an entry level generalist practitioner and has successfully mastered the nine core competencies.

The evaluation is a confidential document, used solely within the confines of the School of Social Work, and is to be prepared with this understanding. At no time are students required to show this document to future employers or agency personnel.

**Placement Difficulties**

In the event that a student encounters difficulties or develops concerns related to her/his/their field placement experience for any reason, it is expected that she/he/they will raise the issue first with their field instructor. If an agreeable plan cannot be worked out then the student should meet directly with the field faculty liaison, either in the context of the field seminar or in a privately arranged meeting. The faculty field liaison’s role is to discuss and provide support around field related issues and to assist students in dealing with and resolving them. Students are responsible for raising concerns honestly and in a timely fashion and working with their faculty liaison to address difficulties they are encountering. Most placement concerns can be resolved readily if students, their faculty liaison, and field instructor work together to address them. Field faculty liaisons are responsible for keeping the Field Coordinator informed about placement difficulties.

**Change of Seminar**

The field Seminar has been established as a year-long, two semester sequence. Students are expected to remain in the same seminar section (same day, time, and Field Faculty Liaison) held the both fall and spring. The primary purpose of this is to provide the cohort members the opportunity to develop as a cohesive unit (providing a safe
and familiar environment within which to work). Maintaining a consistent faculty field instructor-student connection and balancing enrollment numbers are also important.

**Only under extenuating circumstances may students be approved to move into another seminar.** Students must submit a request by email to their current field faculty liaison, to the field faculty liaison into whose seminar they propose to transfer, and to a Field Coordinator. The request must outline the reasons for the transfer. In consultation with one another (field faculty liaison and Field Coordinator), a transfer will be approved or denied. The student will be informed of the decision by the Field Coordinator.

### Section 3: Student Support Services

If at any point in the semester, the student encounters difficulty with the course or feels she/he/they could be performing at a higher level, she/he/they should consult with their field faculty liaison. Students may experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. The following are resources on campus for students.

- For writing skills or time management, students can make an appointment to see a student tutor at the Learning Commons located in both the Portland and Gorham libraries. For more information, visit [http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons](http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons). The Writing Center at LAC is also available to all USM students and is a great option for students living in the greater Lewiston/Auburn area. For more information, please visit [http://usm.maine.edu/writingcenter](http://usm.maine.edu/writingcenter).

- If accommodations are needed due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Center for confidential assistance and accommodation authorization. Timely notification of accommodations is essential. For more information, visit [http://usm.maine.edu/dsc](http://usm.maine.edu/dsc).

- University Health and Counseling Services is a student resource that promotes the health and well-being of the USM community. More information can be found at [www.usm.maine.edu/uhcs](http://www.usm.maine.edu/uhcs).

### Section 4: Syllabus and Assignments

**SWO 554/555**

**FIELD Seminar I & II**

**Foundation Year Syllabus**

**Introduction**

The mission of the University of Southern Maine’s School of Social Work is to provide quality social work education from an advanced social work practice perspective. Students are expected to integrate knowledge obtained from courses in multicultural social work, methods of social work practice, human behavior in the social environment, social policy, and social work research in their field placement.

Field education is an important component of social work education, where students begin to apply theoretical social work concepts and principles to their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The field education program develops and strengthens relationships between practitioners,
educators, and students and contributes to the successful achievement of educational goals pertinent to both the school and the students. Preparing students to be competent advanced practitioners, skilled in assessment and intervention methods for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities is the primary goal of field education.

This class also necessitates the integration of two experiences: the field agency and the classroom learning. It allows for the processing of both areas with a focus on professional development. The theories and tools of the social work profession can be learned in the classroom, but practice behavior is another level of skill development. Both learning in the classroom and the practicum are aligned with the core competencies as are the educational objectives listed below. The focus of the field work seminar is to nurture students’ professional development so they can become critical thinkers and self-directed learners. Combining practice and field will facilitate problem-based learning with real practice situations rather than pre-formulated cases.

**Seminar Description**

This two-semester foundation year seminar is a component of the field placement. The course content focuses on specific agency based practice situations and curriculum integrative themes, in keeping with the School’s mission of working with public, non-profit, private, local, and state agencies.

Seminar meetings will provide students with the opportunity to put theory into practice. Field work seminar utilizes models of peer group learning and peer supervision along with field liaison’s facilitation as needed regarding seminar themes. The basic assumption is that each student has important experiences, information, and insights to share. Discussions are always relevant to and about students’ experiences in their field placements. Because advanced direct practice is demanding and often touches on the practitioners’ personal challenges, it is essential that the seminars establish an atmosphere of trust. Openness, honest feedback, safety and willingness to take risks are the cornerstones of a successful seminar. It is the faculty’s role to ensure that a respectful and caring give and take of ideas, observations, and suggestions is followed. Likewise, it will be each student’s responsibility to contribute to a mutually beneficial learning environment. All students are expected to not only ask for feedback from their peers, but also to give feedback. Students are in a unique position to offer empathic understanding and support to other students and will learn how to offer assistance in non-judgmental, non-directive ways.

The theories and tools of the social work profession can be learned in the classroom, but practice behavior is another level of skill development. Both learning in the classroom and the practicum are aligned with the CSWE 9 core competencies as are the educational objectives listed below. The focus of the field work seminar is to nurture students’ professional development so they can become critical thinkers and self-directed learners. Seminars utilize problem-based learning with real practice situations rather than pre-formulated cases. For this reason, each seminar will be distinct.

**Educational Objectives**

At the end of the field experience students will be able to:

- Demonstrate an understanding of social work practice within a generalist context;
- Apply foundation year social work knowledge, skills, and values to the field experience with multilevel systems;
- Demonstrate beginning level competence in doing bio-psychosocial or other assessments using a strengths based perspective;
- Facilitate interagency collaboration regarding client services, including experience in referral and advocacy efforts on behalf of clients and families;
- Collaborate in formulating and implementing strength based interventions;
- Experience and understand fundamental group facilitation and leadership skills;
- Demonstrate mastery of fundamental group facilitation and leadership skills;
- Recognize the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and practice with regard to ethnicity/race, culture, language, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, sex, status, immigration status, marital...
status, and gender;
● Demonstrate a comprehensive, multilevel understanding of the network of social service providers within the community where the placement agency is located, the agency’s place within this network, as well as the communities served by this agency;
● Examine and implement strategies of change that advance social and economic justice, for excluded and disenfranchised populations and populations at risk;
● Analyze community issues and systematically address the goals, strategies, and resources, appropriate to meeting needs;
● Apply the NASW Code of Ethics and social work values to practice;
● Establish effective working relationships with colleagues and supervisors;
● Begin to evaluate their own practice interventions and their effectiveness.

Teaching Methods
The field seminar provides students with a confidential forum to explore social work practice issues within agency settings which is organized around discussion sessions, mini-lectures, experiential learning activities, film/videos, and individual and group investigation of the issues. The seminar encourages student exploration of personal, community, organizational, social, and policy issues.

Content on Special Populations
This course will include a strong emphasis on understanding the processes that perpetuate oppression and unequal access. This includes an unequal access to power within political, social, and economic institutions and organizations. Institutional racism, sexism, homophobia, heterosexism, poverty, alienation, and other oppressive conditions play a role in shaping the lives of clients. Of special concern are groups experiencing social and economic injustices based on racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, class, and gender characteristics.

Course Expectations

● Attend all classes punctually; two or more absences may be cause for failure. If the student fails seminar the student also fails fieldwork and must withdraw from their Practice class.
● Present and share agency-based cases micro, mezzo, and macro level situations.
● Complete assignments and be prepared to participate actively thoughtfully in the discussion.
● Complete all coursework by assigned dates. Exceptions will only be made for emergencies in which case the instructor must be notified prior to the due date.
● Students are expected to have reviewed, and to be familiar with, the content of the fieldwork manual. This field manual is your textbook for both semesters.

Professional Comportment
The Field Seminar is conducted as a group learning experience. A primary focus of the class is for students to share their field experiences with one another. Each week, students are expected to arrive on time, attend the entire class, and be prepared as participants to listen and support classmates in the learning process. As the semester progresses not only will students be expected to model group behavior as participants but also to facilitate the group as leaders. Below is a list of the group behaviors that students are expected to demonstrate as they learn to be both attentive group members and leaders.

● What is said in this group is considered confidential. Everyone is responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

● Time must be equitably distributed among all members. (a) Each group member will respect different levels of individual assertiveness in class participation; and, (b) those members who are more comfortable speaking up will work to help create space and safety for others to join in the group process.
● Members are expected to give full attention to group members who are speaking. Speak only for yourself in the group. Use “I” rather than “we”.

● Disrespectful language regarding race, ethnicity, color, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, disability, family structure, relationship status, national origin, immigration status, religion and mental health diagnosis will not be tolerated.

● All members take responsibility for making sure they get their own needs met in the group.

● Nobody will be coerced or pressured into doing something for which he or she or they do not feel ready.

*Electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom. If you are expecting an emergency call, notify your field faculty and accommodations will be made.*

**Course Assignments**

Faculty field liaisons will create assignments designed to insure that students demonstrate the integration and application of core competencies. Initiation and completion of assignments is the responsibility of students.

**Grading and Grading Scale**

All work for the Field Practicum and Field Seminar are graded Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), or Fail (F).

**Field Seminar Grading Scale (554 and 555)**

**Pass**

- Timely attendance to every class
- Full engagement in each class including giving feedback to colleagues.
- High to good quality and timeliness in all assigned written work.
- Good performance in field as documented in field evaluation.
- Clear and concise learning agreement that is actively used in placement.
- Behavior in field and class in accordance with the NASW Codes of Ethics.

**Low Pass**

(A student may be at risk of a low pass grade at the end of a semester if one or more of the following is evident. Students receiving a low pass may be subject to an Academic Review.)

- Absent two classes
- Repeated lateness to class
- Lack of professional comportment in class and/or in field.
- Late submission of written work.
- Marginal quality of written work.
- Field evaluation that minimally meets expectations.

**Fail**

- Evaluation that does not meet expectations.
- 3 missed seminar classes
- Repeated lateness
- Low quality written assignments.
- Chronically late assignment submission.
- Poor class participation.
- Excessive absences from class and/or field.
- Behavior in class and field that is not in accordance with NASW Code of Ethics.
The School of Social Work uses a data collection platform called FileMaker. Your Field Faculty Liaison will review FileMaker and all assignments with you early in the fall semester. All assignments and evaluations will be submitted in FileMaker.

FIELD SEMINAR ASSIGNMENTS (SWO 554 and 555)

1. Learning Agreement- due date TBD. (554 fall and 555 spring)
2. Mid Semester Check in: due date TBD (554 only)
3. Brief Oral Presentation on Agency (554 only)

Students will be expected to make a short oral presentation (approximately 10-15 minutes) to their colleagues on their Agency, and develop a “one-pager” about their agency, together with agency brochures for distribution to each member of the class. This assignment will begin on the 5th week of class and continue until all have presented.

4. Narratives: (554 and 555)

The major assignment for this semester is writing narratives. We will decide in the beginning of the semester how many narratives will be required for the semester. Each narrative should be 3-4 pages. Narratives can focus on work with an individual, family, group, organization or community. The narrative is an accounting of what transpired with the addition of what you observed about the client and especially about yourself. What were you thinking and feeling as the conversation transpired? What were your doubts, questions, and concerns as the conversation progressed (or didn’t progress)? Examples of this might be:

“I was feeling a knot in my stomach and not sure how to respond. I wish the real social worker would appear. I don’t know enough to be the ‘clinical social worker’ and I am wondering what does that mean anyway? What is it I am supposed to do? As I am struggling with these questions, I decide to ask the client to tell me more.

“I said ‘I think you should consult his teacher and let her know of your concerns.’ Then I realized that I hadn’t allowed the client any space to respond and so I backed up and said, “I didn’t give you a chance to answer, what you think you might do next.” I definitely have a tendency to rush in and solve things. That was my role in my family.

“My client began to cry and I wasn’t sure in the moment whether to put my arm around her shoulder, offer a tissue, or simply sit quietly. I am not very comfortable with pain. Usually I try to avoid those feelings in my own life. I cover up a lot.

“I am feeling tears well up as I am listening to this story. I do not feel at this point that it would be helpful to my client for me to cry and so I decide it might help if I simply acknowledge the pain verbally. I feel a sense of relief after I have said something and now I am better able to listen. I make a quick mental note to bring this up in supervision.”

The Actual Assignment:

- **Format**: Begin your narrative with a brief description of the agency and its mission (1st narrative only)

- **Background**: Provide the context and history of how you have come to be working with this client. This should include but is not limited to a description of the issues you are working on, how long you have been involved with the client, what are the primary goals that you are working, how long
have you been working with the client such as “this is our fourth session.” Keep the background information to one or two succinct paragraphs.

- **Narrative:** This is your description of the encounter with an emphasis on the most important aspects of the interaction. You should intersperse your reactions, thoughts, questions or concerns as they occurred within the conversation. I have tried to give you some examples above. This is somewhat different from a process recording as it is not necessary to remember word for word what was said. What is most important is that you start to pay attention to your own thinking and feeling. This is what makes a reflective practitioner. What you are trying to accomplish by becoming a reflective practitioner is:

  1. To understand your own emotional responses to clients and difficult situations, commonly referred to as “our own stuff”.

  2. To develop the ability to in the moment, adopt theory to new and novel practice situations (Furman, R., Rowan D. and Bender, K. (2009) from *An Experiential Approach to Group Work*, Lyceum, Chicago, Illinois.

- **Final Reflections**

  This is the last section of your narrative. Now that you have written the narrative of the conversation you are in a position to look back and consider any new thoughts and reactions. It is particularly important to focus on any ways in which you might have handled the situation differently. We will of course read your narratives and offer comments but the person who should benefit the most from this assignment is you. What can you learn about your client, yourself and/or the interaction between?

5. **FINAL REFLECTION PAPER (3-4 pages)**

In addition to a narrative on the final week of class in December, you are to submit a final reflection paper that focuses on your learning this semester. Some of the questions you may consider are:

- What did you learn about yourself this semester?
- What were your challenges?
- What are your strengths in this setting, with this population, as a social worker in general?
- What ethical challenges came up for you if any?
- What do you intend to work on next semester?
- Was the level of support you received adequate? If not, what can you do to facilitate change in the level of supervision or support?
- Are there any lingering questions or concerns that you need to address before next semester?

6. **Foundation Year Final Assignment – Presentation and paper (555)**

7. **Field Evaluation - Due Date TBD (Mid-term 554 and Final 555)**

8. **Attendance Sheet - Due Date TBD (554 and 555)**

This assignment is designed to help you integrate content from your foundation year courses and your field work with the social work competencies that our program is based on. In a well-written paper, identify the competencies
6. Field Evaluations (fall and spring)

CONCENTRATION YEAR
FIELD SEMINAR III & IV
SWO 654 and 655

Seminar Description
Field instruction has always been a critical component of social work education. This year-long seminar accompanies the student's field work experience supporting the learning that takes place within the 600-hour requirement. A seminar is a small group of students engaged in special study under the guidance of a professor. The purpose of this seminar is to integrate the fieldwork experience with the academic course work required for advanced social work practice with individuals, families and groups. Seminar meetings will provide students with the opportunity to put theory into practice. The primary goals of field education are to prepare students to be competent advanced practitioners, skilled in assessment, diagnostic processes, and treatment methods as appropriate for individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities.

Field work seminar utilizes models of peer group learning and peer supervision along with field liaison’s facilitation as needed regarding seminar themes. The basic assumption is that each student has important experiences, information and insights to share. Discussions are always relevant to and about students’ experiences in their field placements. Because advanced direct practice is demanding and often touches on the practitioners’ personal challenges, it is essential that the seminar establishes an atmosphere of trust. Openness, honest feedback, safety and willingness to take risks are the cornerstones of a successful seminar. It is the faculty's role to ensure that a respectful and caring give and take of ideas, observations, and suggestions is followed.

Likewise, it will be each student's responsibility to contribute to a mutually beneficial learning environment. All students are expected to not only ask for feedback from their peers, but also to give feedback. Students are in a unique position to offer empathic understanding and support to other students and will learn how to offer assistance in non-judgmental, non-directive ways.

The theories and tools of the social work profession can be learned in the classroom, but practice behavior is another level of skill development. Both learning in the classroom and the practicum are aligned with the core competencies as are the educational objectives listed below. The focus of the field work seminar is to nurture a student's professional development so they can become critical thinkers and self-directed learners. Seminars utilize problem-based learning with real practice situations rather than pre-formulated cases.
Educational Objectives

At the end of the field experience students will be able to:

- Demonstrate competence in doing bio-psychosocial or other assessments using a strengths-based perspective.
- Initiate and follow through on interagency collaboration regarding client services including experience in referral and advocacy efforts with clients.
- Formulate and implement strengths-based interventions.
- Articulate boundaries between personal values and professional responsibilities in relation to the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Demonstrate social work methods in a culturally competent manner with diverse populations, including people of color, low income individuals and families, LGBTQA persons and families, those individuals and families who are physically and mentally challenged, and older adults.
- Exhibit critical thinking skills in the choice of appropriate practice models and interventions.
- Facilitate a group and demonstrate leadership skills.
- Plan or conduct community-based meetings or activities.
- Build relationships and plan interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in congruence with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Evaluate their own practice interventions and those of relevant systems, and apply findings to practice.
- Utilize comprehensive multi-level knowledge of the network of social service providers within the community where the placement agency is located, the agency’s place within this network, as well as the community served by this agency.
- Apply social work values related to oppression and current policy developments and be able to develop and implement strategies of change based on commitment to excluded and disenfranchised populations.
- Analyze gaps in social services and address their impacts on client systems, organizations, and communities.
- Analyze and synthesize the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and the strategies of change that advance social and economic justice.
- Establish effective working relationships with colleagues and supervisors.
- Participate constructively in the supervisory process and take responsibility for their own professional development.

Teaching Methods

As in year one, the field seminar provides students with a confidential forum to explore advanced social work practice issues within agency settings. The seminar is organized around discussion sessions, mini-lectures, experiential learning activities, film/videos, and individual and group investigation of the issues. Students are expected to present and discuss case material from field in the seminar and provide support for and consultation to their peers. Students are encouraged to explore personal, community, organizational, social and policy issues.

Course Assignments

Faculty field liaisons will create assignments designed to insure that students demonstrate the integration and application of core competencies. Initiation and completion of assignments is the responsibility of students.

The School of Social Work uses a data collection platform called FileMaker. Your Field Faculty Liaison will review FileMaker with you early in the fall semester. All assignments and evaluations will be submitted in FileMaker.

- **Learning Agreement** – due date TBA (654 and 655)
- **Mid-Semester Progress Update** – due date TBA (654 only)
Narratives:
The narrative is an accounting of what transpired in a session with a client (can be individual, family or group) in order to facilitate self-reflection/ awareness, to check transferences and counter-transferences, as well as to develop thoughtful analysis of the presenting situation. The focus of this assignment is the basis of good clinical practice: to understand your own emotional responses to clients and difficult situations.

- 4 narratives--4-5 pages, double-spaced.
- Narratives can focus on work with an individual, family, group, organization or community.
- The narrative is an accounting of what transpired with the addition of what you observed about the client and especially about yourself. What were you thinking and feeling as the conversation transpired? What were your doubts, questions, concerns as the conversation progressed (or didn’t progress)?

Format: Begin your narrative with a brief description of the agency and its mission (1st narrative only)

Background: Provide the context and history of how you have come to be working with this client. This should include but is not limited to a description of the issues you are working on, how long you have been involved with the client, what are the primary goals that you are working. How long have you been working with the client such as “this is our fourth session”? Keep the background information to one or two succinct paragraphs.

Narrative: This is your description of the encounter with an emphasis on the most important aspects of the interaction. You should intersperse your reactions, thoughts, questions or concerns as they occurred within the conversation. I have tried to give you some examples above. This is somewhat different from a process recording as it is not necessary to remember word for word what was said. What is most important is that you start to pay attention to your own thinking and feeling. This is what makes a reflective practitioner. What you are trying to accomplish by becoming a reflective practitioner is:

1. To understand your own emotional responses to clients and difficult situations, commonly referred to as “our own stuff”.

2. To develop the ability to in the moment, adopt theory to new and novel practice situations (Furman, R., Rowan D. and Bender, K. (2009) from An Experiential Approach to Group Work, Lyceum, Chicago, Illinois.

Final Reflection
This is the last section of your narrative. Now that you have written the narrative of the conversation you are in a position to look back and consider any new thoughts and reactions. It is particularly important to focus on any ways in which you might have handled the situation differently. I will, of course, read your narratives and offer comments but the person who should benefit the most from this assignment is you. What can you learn about your client, yourself and/or the interaction between?
**Field Evaluation**: Due Dates TBD. Completed and submitted electronically in FileMaker (654 and 655)

**Attendance Sheets**: Due Dates TBD. Completed and Submitted electronically in FileMaker (654 and 655)

**Seminar Themes**

The following is a list of themes that are likely to be addressed in fieldwork seminars. It reflects the values, skills and knowledge of advanced social work practice, EPAS standards for Social Work Education and the State of Maine requirements for licensure.

**Integration of Values and Ethics**
- The ethics of practice and ethical practice dilemmas
- Professional roles and boundaries
- Acculturation to your new agency
- Self-Care for Social Workers
- Multicultural practice and challenges of cross cultural practice
- Using supervision, clinical consultation, and peer supervision
- Challenging assumptions and barriers to practice
- Developing and maintaining trusting and purposeful relationships with clients

**Integration of Skills**
- Establishment and maintenance of the therapeutic relationship
- Developing and using learning agreements
- Assessment and Goal Setting with Clients
- Assessment of suicidal ideation
- Assessment of challenging interactions and barriers to effective practice
- Developing working relationships with professionals from other disciplines
- Evaluation of practice and critical evaluation of treatment plans and goals
- Termination of the therapeutic relationship

**Integration of Knowledge**
- Diagnosis (DSM V)
- Identification, examination, and application of theories underlying interventions’
- Application of treatment modalities, strategies and techniques
- The use of evidence-based practices

**Content on Special Populations**

A strong emphasis is placed on understanding the processes that perpetuate oppression and unequal access. This includes an unequal access to power within political, social, and economic institutions and organizations. Institutional racism, sexism, homophobia/ heterosexism, poverty, alienation, and other oppressive conditions play a role in shaping the lives of clients. Of special concern are groups experiencing social and economic injustices based on racial, ethnic, sexual orientation, class, and gender characteristics.

**Course Expectations**

- Attend all classes punctually; **if more than two (2) classes are missed, student may fail the class. If you fail seminar you also fail field. Repeated lateness will be considered an absence.**
● Present and share agency-based cases micro, mezzo and macro level situations.

● Complete assignments prior to each class session and participate actively and thoughtfully in the discussion.

● Complete all coursework by assigned dates. Exceptions will only be made for emergencies, in which case the instructor must be notified prior to the due date.

● **Students are expected to have reviewed, and to be familiar with, the content of the field work manual.**

**Professional Comportment**

The Field Seminar is conducted as a group learning experience. A primary focus of the class is for students to share their field experiences with one another. Students are expected to arrive on time, attend the entire class, and be prepared as participants to listen and support classmates in the learning process. As the semester progresses not only will students be expected to model group behavior as participants but also to facilitate the group as leaders. Below is a list of the group behaviors that students are expected to demonstrate as they learn to be both attentive group members and leaders.

● What is said in this group is considered privileged information. Everyone is responsible for maintaining confidentiality.

● Time must be equitably distributed among all members. (a) Each group member will respect different levels of individual assertiveness in class participation; and, (b) those members who are more comfortable speaking up will work to help create space and safety for others to join in the group process.

● Members are expected to give the full attention to their colleagues. Speak only for yourself in the group. Use “I” rather than “we”. The use of electronic media for anything other than note taking is unacceptable.

● Disrespectful language regarding race, ethnicity, color, socio-economic status, gender, sexual orientation, age, culture, disability, family structure, relationship status, national origin, immigration status, religion and mental health diagnosis will not be tolerated.

● All members take responsibility for making sure they get their own needs met in the group. Nobody will be coerced or pressured into doing something for which he or she does not feel ready.

**Grading and Grading Scale**

All work for the Field Practicum and Field Seminar are graded Pass (P), Low Pass (LP), or Fail (F).

**Field Seminar Grading Scale**

**Pass**

● Timely attendance to every class
● Full engagement in each class including giving feedback to colleagues.
● High to good quality and timeliness in all assigned written work.
● Good performance in field as documented in field evaluation.
● Clear and concise learning agreement that is actively used in placement.
● Behavior in field and class in accordance with the NASW Codes of Ethics.
Low Pass (A student may be at risk of a low pass grade at the end of a semester if one or more of the following is evident. Students receiving a low pass may be subject to an Academic Review.)

- Absent two or more classes
- Repeated lateness (will be counted as an absence)
- Lack of professional comportment in class and/or in field.
- Late submission of written work.
- Marginal quality of written work.
- Field evaluation that meets minimally meets expectations.

Fail

- Evaluation that does not meet expectations.
- Low quality written assignments.
- Chronically late assignment submission.
- Poor class participation.
- Absent 3 seminar classes
- Excessive absences from field.
- Behavior in class and field that is not in accordance with NASW Code of Ethics

Chapter 4: Policies and Procedures

Section 1: School of Social Work

Student Field Grievance Procedure

Difficulties between student, field faculty liaison, and field instructor are handled within the School of Social work. Student complaints regarding field practicum are first addressed to his/her/their field faculty liaison. It is the responsibility of that faculty liaison to set up a meeting with the field instructor to discuss the student’s concerns. Although most grievances are resolved at this level, in a few cases there is a need to take the process further. In such instances the following procedure occurs.

The Field Coordinator is consulted regarding the issues being raised by the student and a plan of action is determined based on the Field Committee’s decision regarding the problem. This can result in several outcomes:

1. Changing the student’s field placement based on available information.
2. Asking that the agency provide another field instructor to take the student.
3. Counseling the student regarding his/her/their readiness for the rigors of field placement and suggesting that he/she/they withdraw from field.
4. Requesting that the fieldwork coordinator work with the other three parties to mediate the issues regarding the field placement.

If after working in the above way it is decided that the student is not currently able to meet the needs of client and agency and therefore should not continue in field, but the student refuses to accept this decision, then an Academic Review Meeting is called to make a final decision.
Problem Resolution Meeting and Academic Review Policy

Difficulties between a student, a faculty member, Faculty Field Liaison, and Field Instructor are handled within the School of Social Work. If field is involved, it is the responsibility of the Faculty-Field Liaison to notify the Field Work Coordinator and to set up a meeting with the Field Instructor to discuss the student’s concerns. Although most grievances are resolved at this level, in a few cases there is a need to take the process further. In such instances, a Problem Resolution Meeting or Academic Review will be arranged. The procedure is outlined as follows:

(1) Purpose of and Reasons to convene a Problem Resolution Meeting

This option is instituted to address minor issues or concerns that arise for students in the classroom, in fieldwork or any other part of the program that require a process for intervention and problem resolution, but do not rise to the level of needing an Academic Review. This is an intermediate step that allows for assessment of the problem, open discussion and problem resolution. The outcome of this may point to the need for a full Academic Review, but typically problems are solved at this level. Any student or faculty member can request a Problem-Solving Meeting by contacting the MSW Program Coordinator. The MSW Coordinator will assess the need to convene the meeting and make the decision about which type of meeting forum is needed. This meeting is facilitated by the MSW Program Coordinator.

(2) Purpose of and Reasons for the Academic Review:

The purpose of an Academic Review Meeting is to provide a forum for discussion and decision making when the traditional advisor/advisee relationship is believed to be inadequate for resolving the problem situation.

The issues that are the focus of an Academic Review are often related to problems that emerge in field work (e.g., the suitability of a student for the field of social work as defined in the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers). However, there are many other reasons an Academic Review might be called. The following list, though not exhaustive, offers some examples of issues that could prompt an Academic Review:

- A student is evidencing academic or field difficulties;
- A student receives a failing grade in a critical course or is placed on academic probation;
- Problems emerge between a student and his/her field instructor that cannot be remediated with the faculty-field liaison.
- A student violates the NASW Code of Ethics in field or in the classroom.
- A student receives a poor field evaluation or has been dismissed from field placement.

The outcome of the Academic Review usually includes: (a) resolution without conditions, or (b) a plan for resolution with conditions. In some situations, when a resolution cannot be achieved, the Academic Review may result in the student’s termination from the Social Work program.

In addition to addressing clearly identified problems needing resolution, the Academic Review may be used as a forum to facilitate early intervention when a student is evidencing signs of academic or fieldwork difficulties. In some situations, developing plans to deal with emerging problems can mitigate more serious complications, and efforts are made to use the Academic Review in this way whenever possible.

(3) Academic Review Procedures:

A) An Academic Review is requested.
● Any social work faculty member or student can request an Academic Review. This meeting may be called after a student has spoken to his/her advisor but before the issue is taken to the level of the Office of the Dean.

B) An Academic Review is scheduled.

● The Academic Review is called by the MSW or BSW Coordinator. The Coordinator contacts the individuals involved to invite them and arrange for a day and time. The student is then informed when the meeting is scheduled. The Academic Review will occur within ten business days of the request for such a meeting.

● All relevant social work faculty and community professionals may be invited to attend the Academic Review Meeting, along with the student and his/her advisor. If key individuals cannot be present for the meeting, they are asked to submit their contributions in written form to be read aloud at the review meeting.

● The student may choose to invite one person to accompany him/her at the review meeting. This person can serve as a support only and is not a participant in the meeting. The support person may be invited to add information at the end of the meeting but should not plan to be a contributor. If the student does invite someone, he/she must notify the Coordinator in advance of the meeting.

● The academic advisor, or his/her proxy, serves as the note taker during the Academic Review to ensure the discussion is accurately documented.

C) An Academic Review is held.

● The MSW or BSW Coordinator serves as Chair of the Academic Review and facilitates the meeting.

● The advisor serves as the recorder of the Academic Review and is also a participant.

● All people present at the review, except for the support person, are invited to participate in the discussion of the issues at hand.

● The meeting usually takes one hour (a bit more or less, depending on the situation). Once the discussion has end, the student and the support person are asked to leave the room and the Academic Review Committee remains to discuss and decide about the outcome.

● A letter summarizing the academic review and the outcome is prepared by the Coordinator. Since the formal written letter may take some time to compose, usually the Coordinator informs the student promptly of the outcome by phone or via e-mail once decisions have been made.

● The official letter is mailed to the student within ten business days following the meeting and a copy is placed in the student’s record. The student has the option to prepare a written response within ten days of receiving the letter and it is also placed in the student’s record.

● If a resolution plan is the outcome of the review, this serves as a contract between the student and the SSW. The student is expected to follow through with the plan as detailed in the letter.

(4) The Right to Appeal

Nothing in this policy statement is intended to interfere with or deny any right guaranteed to a student by the University of Maine system.
A) Appeal Process

Should a student not agree with a decision resulting from the Academic Review, an appeal may be precipitated by the student. The appeal process is initiated by a letter from the student to the Director of the School of Social Work outlining the reasons for the appeal. The Director may contact the student for more information or to schedule a meeting to discuss the situation in more detail. The appeal could be resolved at this level, but should the student feel the process has not addressed the issue in a satisfactory manner, he/she may appeal to the Dean of the College of Management and Human Services by contacting the Dean’s office. Further, if the student is not satisfied with the resolution at the Dean’s level, the student may appeal further to the Provost. All stages of the appeal process are documented and filed in the student’s record.

If the student feels the above process has not resolved the issue, he or she may request that the USM Student Senate Executive Committee review the issue and report its findings to the President of the University. The final decision rests with the President, after the receipt of recommendations from those involved.

Policies Related to Academic and Field Calendar, Holidays and Absences

Foundation year students normally work in the field 16 hours per week and are required to complete 240 hours per semester. Concentration year students normally work in the field 20 hours per week and are required to complete 300 hours per semester. Weekly schedules are negotiated between the student and agency field instructor. It is expected that the majority of placement time will be completed during regular business hours, although arrangements for some placement hours on weekends and evenings may be possible.

Students are required to attend their placement only during the academic calendar year, unless otherwise negotiated between the student, field coordinator, and field instructor. Students are strongly urged to maintain some type of contact with their agency placement during semester break. Most students plan on working at their placements during the long semester break between the fall and spring semesters.

The academic calendar lists the holidays and school vacation days during which students are not required to be in field placement. If an agency holiday occurs on a normal placement day, it is considered a holiday for the student. However, students will need to make up missed hours at another time. Planned absences should be negotiated in advance.

In the event of illness, emergency, inclement weather, or other unavoidable absence, students should inform the agency as soon as possible. If a student misses a considerable amount of placement time, the field faculty liaison should be contacted by the field instructor to discuss a plan for making up the time. In extreme situations the student may need to withdraw from field and begin a new placement the following academic year. Students must submit a re-admission to field application by the designated deadline. (See section on Placement Difficulties).

It is expected that foundation year students will work their 480 and concentration year students will work their 600 hours over the course of the entire academic year. The hours should be completed by the end of the spring semester when classes end.

Grade Policy

1. If a grade of less than B- has been earned in a social work practice course, students may not remain in a current field placement or begin a new field placement until the course is satisfactorily completed with a grade of B- or better. Advanced standing students who receive a B- or less in a social work practice course will be withdrawn from field placement and advanced standing status. The student will be permitted to continue in the program as a regular, two-year student.
2. A grade of F in a field work course will result in withdrawal from the University (see Graduate Studies Withdrawal Policy).

3. In any semester in which the cumulative GPA falls below a 3.0 (B average), the student will be placed on probation. The student will have the following semester to improve her or his status. A student on academic probation may not begin a field placement. If, after one semester, the student's GPA has not improved to a 3.0, the student will be withdrawn from the program. A 3.0 GPA is necessary for graduation. Students may only count 3 credits of C in an elective toward graduation. A cumulative GPA below 2.0 will result in withdrawal from the University (see Graduate Studies Withdrawal Policy as it appears in the Graduate School Catalog).

4. Students who receive a grade of less than B-, or whose GPA drops below a 3.0 must contact their advisor or Director (if advisor is unavailable) within one week of receiving their grades.

Incomplete Grade Policy
An incomplete grade must be changed to a full grade prior to progression to the next sequential course, unless an arrangement involving the student and the faculty has been agreed upon in writing. Students who do not complete the required work by the designated time will be ineligible for field practicum placement in September.

Field Work Grade Policy
A grade of LP or below in any field seminar or field experience (SWO 554/555 or SWO 654/655) will automatically trigger the convening of an academic review.

Grade Appeal Policy
Please refer to the Academic Appeal Policy in the USM Graduate Catalog.

Policies on Students Using Their Employment as Field Placement
Students may be discouraged from using their employment site for a field practicum for the following reasons:

- Field placement is intended to expose students to a new learning experience and environment,
- Both the student and employment supervisor are apt to experience role confusion with the addition of a field practicum relationship,
- The expectations of a placement relationship and a work relationship are different (field placement should be educationally focused rather than centered on agency service),
- Students might be less likely to take a critical/objective stance toward their agencies or to question agency policies.

Therefore, if students propose using their place of employment as their field site:

- They must first meet with the field coordinator to discuss the viability of such a proposal and to get a copy of the Placement at Place of Employment contract to complete as soon as possible. Completed contracts must be returned to the field coordinator before the placement can be officially approved.
- The field coordinator assesses the employment site for field placement suitability, which includes the appointment of a qualified field instructor (someone other than the employment supervisor).
- The agency must provide field instruction with an MSW from a CSWE accredited program.
- The student's practicum roles must be different from regular employment, provide new learning opportunities and appropriate to the student's level of social work training.
- The student must show how she/he plans to fulfill the placement hour requirements beyond her/his regularly scheduled employment time.
- A copy of the approved Placement at Place of Employment contract will be shared with the student's field
faculty liaison in order for appropriate monitoring to take place.

*Advanced standing students may use their current employment for their one-year of field placement under certain circumstances. Two-year students may only use their current employment for one of their two placement years.*

Field Seminar Policy

Students who are related (for example: married couples, domestic partners, blood relatives, step-relatives, etc.) are strongly discouraged from registering for the same section of graduate courses. **For field classes, however, related students are not permitted to register for the same field seminar section.** Students remain with their field seminar class throughout the academic year.

Class Attendance Policy

Students are expected to attend regularly scheduled classes, and field work agencies should not schedule students or require the attendance of students during class time.

Policy Regarding Academic and Professional Standards

- Students must adhere to all policies outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (see end of this manual) and the USM Student Conduct Code (see Graduate Catalog).
- Students have the responsibility of understanding and ensuring the protection of client confidentiality and right to privacy. Any case material that is used for educational or instructional purposes must be completely disguised so that total anonymity of the client is assured. All case material required for the School’s educational purposes will be gathered from the field practicum experience (not from an employment or volunteer experience).
- Any agency materials or information used for professional, educational, or instructional purposes must be cleared for use by the field instructor.
- Students are responsible for adhering to the laws, legal and ethical issues involved in the social work profession, and specifically in the State of Maine. Field practica should familiarize the students with the following: child abuse and neglect reporting laws and procedures; elder abuse reporting and procedures; suicide and homicide reporting; HIPPA regulations; voluntary vs. involuntary hospitalization; gravely disabled; privileged communication; domestic violence; informed consents, release of information; scope of practice; personal safety; any other potential high risk situations that students may be exposed to.
- Violations of academic standards, confidentiality, ethical or other professional principles or social work values shall result in an academic review, which may lead to dismissal from the program (see MSW Student Handbook).

Withdrawal from Field Placement

Students who wish to withdraw from their field placement any time after the placement has been confirmed must do so in collaboration with the field coordinator and their field faculty liaison. Once a decision to withdraw has been made, a student must meet with her/his advisor to discuss the process and procedures for withdrawal and for returning to field at a later time.

Student Support Services

At any point in the semester, if you encounter difficulty with the course or feel that you could be performing at a higher level, consult with me. Students experience difficulty in courses for a variety of reasons. The following are resources on campus for students.
For writing skills or time management, you can make an appointment to see a student tutor at the Learning Commons located in both the Portland and Gorham libraries. For more information, visit http://www.usm.maine.edu/learningcommons. The Writing Center at LAC is also available to all USM students and is a great option for students living in the greater Lewiston/Auburn area. For more information, please visit http://usm.maine.edu/writingcenter.

If you need accommodations due to a disability, please contact the Disability Services Center for confidential assistance and accommodation authorization. Timely notification of accommodations is essential. For more information, visit http://usm.maine.edu/dsc.

University Health and Counseling Services is a student resource that promotes the health and well-being of the USM community. More information can be found at www.usm.maine.edu/uhs

Section 2: University Policies

Equal Opportunity

In complying with the letter and spirit of applicable laws and pursuing its own goals of pluralism, the University of Southern Maine shall not discriminate on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin or citizenship status, age, disability, or veteran’s status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University.

https://www.maine.edu/about-the-system/board-of-trustees/policy-manual/section401/

AIDS Policy

The USM AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) policy has been established to protect both the rights of individuals infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) as well as the health and safety of all others at the institution. Current research indicates that AIDS and ARC (AIDS-related complex) may develop from HIV infection. Individuals infected with HIV may not always be diagnosed or have symptoms of AIDS; HIV infection is not transmitted by casual contact.

1) Discrimination

The University of Southern Maine will not discriminate in any manner against any person who is infected with HIV. This includes admissions, facilities access, hiring, housing, promotion, tenure and/or termination.

2) Testing

The University of Southern Maine will not require HIV testing for either its students or employees. Persons who want more information on HIV testing may contact a health care provider either at the University or off-campus.

3) Confidentiality

Information about a person's HIV status may only be included in medical or health care records and not in student or employee records of a general nature. Furthermore, it is against the law to disclose HIV test results to anyone without the written consent of the person tested. This means that no one, under any circumstances, may discuss or share records of HIV test results with anyone other than individuals designated in writing by the tested person.

4) Penalties
Disclosing a person's HIV test results without written consent may result in disciplinary measures under University policy. Also, Maine law states that anyone who does tell another's test results may be sued for actual damages and costs, plus a civil penalty of up to $5,000.

https://usm.maine.edu/deanofstudents/hiv-aids-policy

**Sex Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Retaliation Policy**

https://usm.maine.edu/community-standards-mediation/university-policies

**Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism, the use without attribution of language, ideas, or the organization of ideas not one's own, is a fundamental breach of basic academic principles and is prohibited in all courses. Evidence of plagiarism will result in a grade of F for the assignment and may, at the discretion of the instructor, lead to an F in the course. In addition, further sanctions may be imposed through the Student Conduct Code. A copy of the USM Student Guide to Academic Integrity and/or a copy of the Student Academic Integrity Policy is available from the Office of Community Standards, 125 Upton Hall, Gorham (Tel: 207-780-5242) or on their website, https://usm.maine.edu/community-standards-mediation/academic-integrity

**Drug and Alcohol Policy**

The primary goal of the alcohol and other drugs policy is the health and safety of all members of the University of Southern Maine community. We value and promote an environment of legal and lower risk alcohol use and support alcohol-free environments. We recognize alcoholic beverages may be available at some campus activities however such activities must be consistent with the University's values and being under the influence of alcohol in no way lessens accountability to the University community.

The University complies fully with local, state, and federal laws regarding the sale, possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The unlawful manufacture, possession, use or distribution of drugs or controlled substances is strictly prohibited. All students and guests are held responsible for behavior in violation of this policy. The University provides education on alcohol and other drug use through programs, support, and resources. For more information, please go to the links below.

https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/deanofstudents/2012%20Alcohol-Drugs%20Brochure-1.pdf

**Section 3: Social Work Links:**

1. **NASW (National Association of Social Workers):** [link](https://www.nasw.org)

   Founded in 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world, with more than 120,000 members. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

2. **NASW PRESS - NASW Press Journals Online:** [link](https://www.nasw.org/journals)

3. **Social Work (Jobs Link):** [link](https://www.nasw.org/careers)

Whether you’re looking for a new job, or ready to take the next step in your career, we'll help you find the opportunity that’s right for you.
4. **Maine Social Work Board of Licensure:** [link]
Information regarding the status of an application will not be provided by telephone or email.

5. **Society of Social Work Leadership in Healthcare:** [link]
The Society for Social Work Leadership in Health Care is an association, 1200 members strong, dedicated to promoting the universal availability, accessibility, coordination, and effectiveness of health care that addresses the psychosocial components of health and illness.

6. **The New Social Worker Online Magazine:** [link]
Welcome, social work students and professionals! Read articles from the Spring 2012 edition of *The New Social Worker* magazine, now in its 19th year!

7. **Council on Social Work Education:** [link]
Purpose: Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

8. **Social Workers SPEAK:** [link]
SocialWorkersSpeak.org gives you a chance to influence how the entertainment industry and news media depicts the social work profession and issues social workers care about.

9. **SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration):** [link]
The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is the agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that leads public health efforts to advance the behavioral health of the nation. SAMHSA's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

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**Section 4: NASW Code of Ethics**

**Code of Ethics**

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 2017 NASW Delegate Assembly

The NASW Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide to the everyday professional conduct of social workers. This Code includes four sections:

- The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values.
- The second section, "Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics," provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice.
- The third section, "Ethical Principles," presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice.
- The final section, "Ethical Standards," includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.
The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

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

Preamble

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

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

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

Purpose of the Code of Ethics

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

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.

6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. * In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Ethical Principles**

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

**Value: Service**

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

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

**Value: Social Justice**

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

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

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

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

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

**Value: Importance of Human Relationships**

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

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

**Value: Integrity**

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

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value: Competence**

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

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

**Ethical Standards**

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to
colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

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

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.01 Commitment to Clients

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

1.02 Self-Determination

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

1.03 Informed Consent

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

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

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

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

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients the social workers’ policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.
(f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients’ capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

(g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients’ suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients’ intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and the clients’ ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.

(h) Social workers should obtain clients’ informed consent before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.

(i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or other people from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

1.04 Competence

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

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

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

(d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.

(e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

1.05 Cultural Awareness and Social Diversity

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

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.

(d) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients and how they may use electronic technology. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

1.06 Conflicts of Interest

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

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

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

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

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

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

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

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

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or others. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

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

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

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

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

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information, electronically or in person, in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semi-public areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

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

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

(m) Social workers should take reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

(n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.

(o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker’s electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.

(p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.

(q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client’s informed consent.

(r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional websites or other forms of social media.

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

(t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

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

(v) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.
(w) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

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

(b) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.

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

1.09 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

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

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

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

1.10 Physical Contact

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

1.11 Sexual Harassment

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

1.12 Derogatory Language

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

1.13 Payment for Services

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

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

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

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

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

1.15 Interruption of Services

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

1.16 Referral for Services

(a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that other services are required.
(b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

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

1.17 Termination of Services

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.01 Respect

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

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

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

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

2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

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

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

2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues

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

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

2.05 Consultation

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

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

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

2.06 Sexual Relationships

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

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

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

2.08 Impairment of Colleagues

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

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

2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues

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

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

2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

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

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

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

(d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, the NASW National Ethics Committee, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.
3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

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

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

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the supervisee, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.

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

3.02 Education and Training

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

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

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

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 Performance Evaluation

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

3.04 Client Records

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

(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.
(c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

3.05 Billing

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

3.06 Client Transfer

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

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

3.07 Administration

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

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

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

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

3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development

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

3.09 Commitments to Employers

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.
(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

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

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

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

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

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

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

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

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

4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.01 Competence

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

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

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

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

4.03 Private Conduct

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

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

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

4.05 Impairment

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

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

4.06 Misrepresentation

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

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

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

4.07 Solicitations

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

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

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

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

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

5.01 Integrity of the Profession

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

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

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

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

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

5.02 Evaluation and Research

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

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

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

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

(e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
(f) When using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.
6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.01 Social Welfare

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

6.02 Public Participation

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

6.03 Public Emergencies

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

6.04 Social and Political Action

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

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

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

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