



UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK**



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School of Social Work Contact Information

The Administrative Offices are located on the Garden Level of Masterton Hall on USM's Portland Campus. The address and telephone numbers are below:

Mailing Address: University of Southern Maine
School of Social Work
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Portland, ME 04104

Telephone Number: Administrative Office
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Welcome Message from the Director

Congratulations on your acceptance into the MSW program at the University of Southern Maine (USM) and welcome to our educational community! The USM School of Social Work (SSW) provides highly enriching learning experiences to those who are studying to become professional social workers. You will soon find that every one of our faculty is deeply committed to high quality education and is ready to give individual attention in your journey toward that professional career.

The MSW program at USM, founded in 2001, is well established in the community of social work practice in Maine and beyond. In addition to dedication to teaching and training the next generation of social work practitioners, the School of Social Work faculty are engaged in various forms of practice and research often involving community partners. The professional and academic activities of the faculty serve the social work curriculum well, and we are proud to offer a program that reflects the realities of contemporary practice, preparing students for a high degree of competence in this exciting field. The MSW curriculum, with a focus on Advanced Social Work practice, is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). As the national accrediting body of social work education, CSWE has stringent guidelines and policies that apply to all social work educational programs in the United States. Thus, you can be assured that the education you receive here is thoroughly consistent with other social work programs across the nation.

As an incoming MSW student, you are embarking on a life-long journey into a most meaningful and rewarding professional career. Our MSW graduates are well respected and have a strong presence in the practice community. Many alumni return to the USM SSW once employed in the field to work with us to serve our students and continuously improve our programs, ensuring that we respond to the ever changing and evolving practice mandates. While Social Work is certainly about service and practice, it is also about networking and relationship building. We look forward to having you in our ranks as students and trainees and later as social work colleagues.

Whatever aspect of social work practice you eventually choose, as an advanced social work practitioner, you will be engaged in reducing human distress, changing inequitable social relationships, and creating responsive and balanced organizational structures and social systems. While in the School of Social Work, you will learn to employ intervention methods to address ongoing changes in individual, group and community and to facilitate continuous progress within organizational structures and social policies. In moving toward, a professional social work career, you will be challenged to modify existing ways of understanding, refine your practice skills, expand your knowledge base, and develop your own sense of commitment to professional values and ethical standards as specified by the National Association of Social Workers. With the help of your academic advisor and other faculty members, you can expect that your time at our School of Social Work will be a deeply rewarding and enriching experience. We are dedicated to the success of our students and will assist you in any way we can as you journey to learn, grow, and acculturate to this profession.

As a supplement to the USM Graduate Catalog, this MSW Student Handbook describes many aspects of the MSW program including the curriculum, various School policies and

procedures, resources, and services. I hope that you will find this Handbook an invaluable companion during your progress toward the MSW degree. For your reference, a copy of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers is provided in Appendix A of this Handbook. The Code of Ethics guides all professional social work practice and you are required to read and learn it. Please make this a top priority as you begin your social work education as you will refer to it—and be held accountable to it—throughout your training and professional life.

If you have any questions that are not addressed in this Handbook, I encourage you to contact your academic advisor or the MSW Program Coordinator.

Wishing you the best of luck with your studies,

Jeanette Andonian, MSW, Ph.D.
Associate Dean and Associate Professor

School of Social Work: Mission & Diversity Statements

Mission Statement

The University of Southern Maine's School of Social Work is committed to educating culturally competent generalist social work practitioners prepared for multi-level, strengths-based practice that values the centrality of community 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.

The MSW Curriculum: Advanced Social Work Practice

The School of Social Work curriculum is offered in a high quality learning environment that prepares MSW graduates for advanced social work practice. Advanced social work practice involves the specific acquisition and demonstration of complex knowledge and skills from a wide variety of disciplines and the application of a full range of sophisticated intervention strategies with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. The choice of appropriate intervention strategies for distinct situations is evidence-based, which assumes the presence of both empirical data gained from scholarly research and practice wisdom. The intervention cycle in advanced social work practice encompasses discrete periods of: (1) fact-finding and initial assessment; (2) direct and indirect involvement with an individual, group, family, organization, or community in need of assistance; (3) ongoing assessment as the professional engagement continues; and, (4) evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of planned outcomes.

Under this structure of advanced social work practice, students may choose to focus on either direct or macro practice by tailoring elective choices in one of these areas. Direct Practice prepares clinicians, therapists, case managers, and case consultants who work with individuals, families and groups. Macro practice prepares supervisors, administrators, program planners, policy analysts and practitioners, community organizers and consultants who work with organizations and communities. Both of these areas are introduced throughout the foundation year curriculum of the MSW program. During the concentration year, students can focus their study and training in one of these areas through fieldwork and careful selection of elective courses.

MSW Program Goals

- A) To apply existing knowledge and develop new knowledge to advance social work practice through teaching, scholarship and service of faculty and students while building upon the profession's history, purposes, and philosophy.
- B) To prepare students at the Master level for advanced social work practice in an increasingly complex and diverse world.
- C) To prepare students for advanced social work practice that includes respect for human rights and social and economic justice.
- D) To develop in students' skills to employ critical thinking in addressing complex human social problems throughout their lifetime.

The goals of the MSW program in the School of Social Work at the University of Southern Maine involve preparing 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 10 core competencies. These core competencies, as outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2008) of the Council on Social Work Education, relate to professional identity; ethical practice; critical thinking; diversity; human rights and social justice; research; human behavior and the social environment; social policy; evolving contexts of social work practice; and professional interventions at multiple levels.

Advanced social work practice is multilevel, situation-driven, strengths-based social work practice that values diversity and the central importance of community; promotes social and economic justice; uses creativity, critical thinking, and leadership in the service of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The USM SSW trains professionals who are competent in autonomous social work practice that promotes social and economic justice, and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems across all systems levels within individual, familial, organizational, and community contexts.

**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accreditation Standards:
Nine Social Work Core Competencies (2015)**

The objectives of the MSW curriculum are aligned with the accreditation standards of CSWE, defined as outcome competencies; that are operationalized in the curriculum and in field training. These outcomes are presented below. By the end of the program, students will:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.

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

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

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice.

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

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

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

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

Foundation and Advanced Level (Concentration) Curriculum

The first year (i.e. foundation) curriculum introduces the social work profession that sets the stage for the advanced curriculum during concentration year. Students take courses in a sequence that provides the requisite foundation knowledge and beginning practice skill acquisition. The foundation curriculum includes one semester of multicultural social work (SWO 501), social welfare policy (SWO 504); research (SWO 505); and one elective; and two semesters of human behavior in the social environment (SWO 502, 552), social work practice (SWO 503, 553), and field work & field seminar (SWO 554, 555) courses.

The concentration year (i.e. advanced) curriculum requires all students to take one semester of advanced social welfare policy (SWO 604), two semesters of research (SWO 605, 652), advanced practice (SWO 603, 651), and field work & field seminar (SWO 654, 655) courses. During the concentration year, in consultation with their faculty advisor, students are also required to take three electives in the area of their academic and professional interest. All students in field placement are required to take the field seminar and a corresponding practice course concurrently. Classes must be taken in sequence.

Field education is the heart of the M.S.W. program. Students are required to complete approved field practicum experiences and requirements during two years of the program. Students complete 480 hours in field practicum/seminar in the foundation year and 600 hours in the concentration year. In the first year, field instruction is focused on the application of knowledge, skills, and learning relative to foundation content... In the concentration year, the advanced curriculum focuses on the application of advanced knowledge and skills. During the concentration year, students may focus on either direct or macro practice by selecting a field placement in one of the areas and choosing relevant elective courses that support training and skill building.

Low Residency (Online) MSW Regular Program

Students in the low-residency online MSW cohort option will complete 2 courses each semester over the summer, fall and spring semesters completing the program in 3 years. Courses will be completed primarily online, with 2-3 face-to-face Friday meetings per semester on USM's Portland campus. Students will be informed of the Friday dates prior to the beginning of each semester for planning purposes.

The program curriculum is identical to the regular MSW program and is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The only difference between the two options is the program pace and the delivery format for the content, as described above. Courses must be taken in the prescribed sequence, which is included on this page under "MSW Low-Residency course sequence"

The program is being led by USM School of Social Work, MSW Coordinator & Assistant Professor Dorothea Ivey, Ph.D. If there are any questions, please be in touch with Dr. Dorothea Ivey at dorothea.ivey@maine.edu

University of Southern Maine
School of Social Work

Curriculum Planner for Regular and Advanced Standing MSW Programs
(Full and Part Time Cohorts)

Note: All students are required to take the courses in the sequence listed in the tables below based on **cohort**. Any desired modifications to your course plan must be first discussed with your advisor and reviewed by the MSW Program Coordinator for feasibility.

Full Time Two-Year Regular Cohort

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	SWO 501 Multicultural Social Work SWO 502 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior I SWO 503 Social Work Practice I*** SWO 504 Social Welfare Policy I** SWO 554 Fieldwork & Seminar I	SWO 552 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior II SWO 553 Social Work Practice II*** SWO 505 Social Work Research I SWO 555 Fieldwork & Seminar II Elective Option*
Summer Session	Elective Option*	
Year 2	SWO 651 Social Work Practice, Individuals & Families (or SWO 603, SW Practice w/Groups)*** SWO 605 Social Work Research II SWO 654 Fieldwork & Seminar III Elective Option*	SWO 603 Social Work Practice w/Groups (or SWO 651, SW Practice, Individuals & Families)*** SWO 652 Social Work Research III SWO 604 Social Welfare Policy II** SWO 655 Fieldwork & Seminar IV Elective Option*

Part- Time Four-Year Regular Cohort

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	SWO 501 Multicultural Social Work SWO 502 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior I	SWO 505 Social Work Research I SWO 552 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior II
Summer Session	Elective Option*	
Year 2	SWO 503 Social Work Practice I*** SWO 504 Social Welfare Policy I** SWO 554 Fieldwork & Seminar I	SWO 553 Social Work Practice II*** SWO 555 Fieldwork & Seminar II Elective Option*
Summer Session	Elective Option*	
Year 3	SWO 605 Social Work Research II Elective Option*	SWO 652 Social Work Research III SWO 604 Social Welfare Policy II**
Summer Session	Elective Option*	
Year 4	SWO 651 Social Work Practice, Individuals & Families (or SWO 603, SW Practice w/Groups)*** SWO 654 Fieldwork & Seminar III Elective Option*	SWO 603 Social Work Practice w/Groups (or SWO 651, SW Practice, Individuals & Families)*** SWO 655 Fieldwork & Seminar IV

Full Time One-Year Advanced Standing Cohort

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	SWO 605 Social Work Research II SWO 651 Social Work Practice, Individuals & Families (or SWO 603, SW Practice w/Groups)*** SWO 654 Fieldwork & Seminar III Two Electives	SWO 652 Social Work Research III (or SWO 695, Thesis Option) SWO 604 Social Welfare Policy II SWO 603 Social Work Practice w/Groups (or SWO 651, SW Practice, Individuals & Families)*** SWO 655 Fieldwork & Seminar IV One Elective

Part Time Two-Year Advanced Standing Cohort

	Fall	Spring
Year 1	SWO 605 Social Work Research II Elective Option*	SWO 652 Social Work Research III (or SWO 695 Thesis Option) SWO 604 Social Welfare Policy II** Elective Option*
Summer Session	Elective Option*	
Year 2	SWO 651 Social Work Practice, Individuals & Families (or SWO 603, SW Practice w/Groups)*** SWO 654 Fieldwork & Seminar III Elective Option*	SWO 603 Social Work Practice w/Groups (or SWO 651, SW Practice, Individuals & Families)*** SWO 655 Fieldwork & Seminar IV

MSW Low Residency Program Information and Curriculum

Please click this [link](#) for more information on the MSW Low-Residency Program

******PLEASE NOTE******

***All students are required to take 3 elective courses.** Electives can be taken in summer session if desired, or during any semester (except for first semester of foundation year). Winter session electives (not listed here) may be an option, but courses may not be offered every year during this time. Winter session courses will be announced on the MSW listserv. Students can take up to 6 elective credits in programs outside of the SSW.

****SWO 504 & SWO 604, Social Welfare Policy I & II,** are listed in particular semesters for optimal sequencing (Fall for 504, Spring for 604), however, these courses are now offered in both fall and spring. Students can take these courses in either semester if more convenient for scheduling.

****Social Work Practice courses are taken concurrently with fieldwork.** No other students are allowed to enroll and all students in a field placement **must** take the companion practice course along with field seminar while in the fieldwork practicum. No exceptions can be made to this policy.

The Cohort Model/Cohort Change Policy & Procedures

Per the Curriculum Planner above, you will note that there are four cohorts in the MSW program:

(1) regular full time, (2) regular part time, (3) advanced standing full time and (4) advanced standing part time. Students are required to make a commitment to a cohort plan when they apply to the program. However, in some instances, for personal reasons, students' may desire to change cohorts once they are matriculated in the program. While cohort changes are strongly discouraged as our program and course enrollment planning relies on the cohort model, it is recognized that a change is sometimes unavoidable. In order to request a cohort change, the students need to set up a meeting with their assigned advisors to discuss the new cohort plan, and then email the change request to the MSW Coordinator, with a copy to their advisor. Cohort changes are usually granted based on student need unless course enrollments will prohibit the addition of more students. Students changing cohorts must fully understand that by doing so, courses they need may not be available for them to take when they are required to take them and this could interfere with timely completion of the program.

Procedure for Requesting a Cohort Change:

- a. Make an appointment to discuss your request to change cohorts with your advisor. The deadline for requesting a cohort change is in November before Thanksgiving break begins.
- b. Develop a plan for taking the courses you need in the required sequence in collaboration with your advisor.
- c. E-mail the MSW Program Coordinator with your request and proposed course plans with a copy to your advisor.
- d. Once anticipated course enrollments are assessed in collaboration with the Director, the MSW Program Coordinator will contact you with a decision about whether the cohort change can be granted.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:

The following offers a brief description of the required and elective courses in the MSW curriculum. The 500 level courses are offered in foundation year; 600 level are the concentration year courses. Elective courses at the 600 level may allow foundation year students to enroll with the instructor's permission.

SWO 501 Multicultural Social Work (3 credits)

This introductory course provides content on culturally diverse populations and serves as the basis for the infusion of cultural diversity issues throughout the graduate curriculum. The premise of this course asserts that the United States is a multicultural society in which social work cannot function effectively unless there is an understanding of how diversity strengthens and enriches us all. Open to non-matriculated graduate students.

SWO 502 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior I (3 credits)

This course examines the theories which address human behavior in mezzo and macro systems. The cultural context of behavior at all levels is an integral and underlying theme of the course. Systems theories, conflict theories, and social constructionist theories are presented.

SWO 503 Social Work Practice I (3 credits)

This course provides the student with an opportunity to acquire beginning practice knowledge and skills in working with individuals, families, groups, and communities. Emphasis is placed on the development of basic practice, interpersonal, self-reflection, and communication skills. Prerequisite: SWO 501, Co-requisite: SWO 554

SWO 504 Social Welfare Policy I (3 credits)

This introductory policy course provides an overview of the history of social welfare as well as an introduction to current social policy issues and dilemmas. Emphasis is placed on historical continuities in analyzing the American system of social welfare provision and lack of provision. Co-requisite or prerequisite: SWO 501.

SWO 505 Social Work Research I (3 credits)

This course introduces a body of knowledge, skills, and attitudinal perspectives designed to produce a high level of competence in the use of social scientific methods of knowledge building. Structured, analytical processes of inquiry are introduced, as well as a rigorous adherence to social work values and ethics. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry are discussed. Prerequisite: SWO 501. Open to non-matriculated graduate students.

SWO 544 Costa Rica Immersion: Social Work Perspectives on Culture, Language, and Service Learning (3 Credits)

This 2-week course takes place in Costa Rica and will introduce students to the colonial heritage, indigenous cultures, and the contemporary sociopolitical, ecological, and economic issues facing this Central American country. Students will receive 4 hours per day of Spanish language instruction, a class in dance and cooking, visits to cultural and recreational sites, lectures on Costa Rican social problems and social work agencies, and service-learning in a local organization such as an orphanage or refugee camp. Two all-day Saturday classes will be held at USM prior to the course trip.

SWO 552 Critical Thinking about Human Behavior II (3 credits)

The course is designed to locate the interplay of biological, psychological, and sociological influences on human behavior within the broader context of culture. Cultural diversity and oppression are seen as central to understanding human behavior and evaluating human behavior theories. The course explores a range of psychological theories such as psychodynamic, narrative, cognitive, and behavioral to understand the person within the complexity of his/her life circumstances. Prerequisites: SWO 501, SWO 502.

SWO 553 Generalist Social Work Practice II (3 credits)

The knowledge, values, and skills for community social work are integrated throughout this course. Ecosystems and social construction theories provide the overarching framework. Within this context, methods for intervening with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities are introduced. Prerequisite: SWO 503.

SWO 554 Field Work & Field Seminar I (3.5 credits)

A graduate internship in an approved community agency, designed to relate social work theory to practice under professional supervision. Fall semester. Co-requisite or prerequisite: SWO 503.

SWO 555 Field Work & Field Seminar II (3.5 credits)

A continuation of SWO 554. Spring semester. Co-requisite or prerequisite: SWO 553.

SWO 575 Gender and Aging (3 credits) (3 credits)

A theoretical and practical course that informs students about aging issues affecting women and men differentially. Students will analyze the manifestations of aging and apply concepts drawn from the behavioral and social sciences. Service learning experience may be available. This course is an elective in both the undergraduate and graduate social work program.

SWO 583 Social Work with Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers

Considers migration patterns and flows across the globe, introduces critical concepts in immigration and US immigration policies. Community based services will be explored with a focus on concepts such as cultural competence, diversity, empowerment, anti-oppressive social work and critical multicultural approaches. Service delivery efforts/approaches with the population will be considered. Cr 3.

SWO 588 Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Issues

Examines the use and abuse of psychoactive substances: street drugs, prescriptions drugs, alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine. Consideration of the history, pharmacology, and physical and psychological effects of each substance. Exploration of prevention and treatment models, with special reference to those in use locally. Cr 3

SWO 596/696 Topics in Diversity (3 credits)

A variety of elective courses under the title of "Topics in Diversity" are offered to facilitate students' development of competency in working with different population groups such as those oppressed by race and ethnicity, language, nationality, social class, gender, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, spiritual and religious affiliation, and other factors. Prerequisite:

Multicultural Social Work (SWO 501) or equivalent as determined by the instructor. Additional prerequisite may be required for some elective courses.

SWO 597 Independent Study (1-3 credits)

This is an individualized course of study on some aspect of social work or social welfare to be selected as a result of consultation between a student and a faculty member. Students who want to complete an independent study on a particular topic must first seek a faculty mentor for the course who will oversee the process. The student should construct a proposal that will then be reviewed by the faculty mentor and submitted for approval by the MSW Coordinator.

Independent studies must focus on a relevant area of interest that is not already included in the MSW curriculum.

SWO 598/698 Topics in Community Social Work Practice (3 credits)

A variety of elective courses under the title of "Topics in Community Social Work Practice" are offered to cover a wide spectrum of micro and macro practice issues. These courses facilitate students' exploration of new practice areas or enhancement of advanced practice skills.

Prerequisite: Social Work Practice I (SWO 503) or equivalent as determined by the instructor. Additional prerequisite may be required for some elective courses.

SWO 603 Social Work Practice III: Social Work Practice with Groups (3 credits)

This course incorporates knowledge building regarding the conceptual base and practice skills of social group work. There is a focus on the uses of groups to bring about change in the individuals, change in the social environment, or change in the larger social system. A range of group models from treatment/growth oriented to task/action oriented groups are addressed.

Prerequisite: SWO 553.

SWO 604 Social Welfare Policy II (3 credits)

This course provides a theoretical and critical model of analyzing policy processes. It contains an overview of policy analysis with particular emphasis on social conflict theory and social constructionist theories of policy formation. Prerequisite: SWO 504, SWO 554, SWO 555.

SWO 605 Social Work Research II: Social Data Analysis (3 credits)

This course provides an interactive learning environment in which students learn to analyze quantitative and qualitative existing social data. The goal of this course is to increase the analytical competencies of students in the planning, and eventual execution, of a community-based research project. Prerequisite: SWO 505.

SWO 651 Social Work Practice IV: Individuals and Families (3 credits)

This course contextualizes the facilitation of change with individuals and families within organizations and communities. Approaches to social work practice are taught within ecosystems, strengths-based framework that reflects a commitment to the values of social and economic justice, cultural diversity, and individual and collective self-determination. Co-requisite or prerequisite: SWO 603. Prerequisite: SWO 555.

SWO 652 Social Work Research III: The Research Project (3 credits)

This course involves the utilization of the research knowledge and skills learned in SWO 505 Social Work Research I and SWO 605 Social Work Research II, and their application to selected social problems or issues of relevance to the needs of special populations or to the social work profession. Prerequisite: SWO 605.

SWO 654 Field Work & Field Seminar III (4.5 credits)

A graduate internship during the concentration year at an approved community agency, designed to relate social work theory to practice under professional supervision. Fall semester. Co- requisite or prerequisite: SWO 603.

SWO 655 Field Work & Field Seminar IV (4.5 credits)

A continuation of SWO 654. Spring semester. Co-requisite or prerequisite: SWO 651. Prerequisite: SWO 654.

SWO 660 Advanced Bio Psychosocial Assessment (3 credits)

This elective course is designed to facilitate the acquisition of practice skills for in-depth bio psychosocial assessment. Knowledge development and skill building for assessment and diagnosis, and the use of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) are covered in this course. This course emphasizes critical analysis of both diagnostic processes and approaches to mental health practice, with attention to ways in which social workers can serve to empower and advocate for clients in the context of service systems to best meet their needs. Consideration of persons within a cultural context is highlighted throughout. This course is an elective for the MSW program but this content is required for students interested in pursuing clinical licensure. Prerequisites: HBSE I & II; Practice IV is preferable as a pre/co- requisite

SWO 695 Thesis Option (6 credits)

In lieu of SWO 652, students may apply to the Research Committee for permission to take the Thesis Option. SWO 695 provides structure and assistance to students wishing to complete a formal thesis rather than a research project. Upon completion, the student will present a verbal summary of the thesis at a formal these defense meeting. This option may be especially attractive for those students contemplating advanced doctoral-level education in social work or in other social science.

SWO 697 Independent Study (1-3 credits)

This is an individualized course of study on some aspect of social work or social welfare to be selected as a result of consultation between a student and a faculty member. Students who want to complete an independent study on a particular topic must first seek a faculty mentor for the course who will oversee the process. The student should construct a proposal that will then be reviewed by the faculty mentor and submitted for approval by the MSW Coordinator. Independent studies must focus on a relevant area of interest that is not already included in the MSW curriculum.

COMMUNICATION, REGISTRATION, ADVISING, STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES, EMERGENCY SERVICES, STUDENT ORGANIZING, AND OTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

This section contains a great deal of information for your reference, including phone numbers and web addresses that you may refer to at different times during your USM tenure.

E-mail and the MSW Listserv

All students are required to secure a USM e-mail account and they are responsible for activating their assigned University email account. The Account Activation web site <https://mail.maine.edu>, been designed for this purpose. You will find useful information on the web regarding student email: <https://usm.maine.edu/computing/student-email>

As the University environment has become paperless, all correspondences should be made through e-mail whenever possible. It is the student's responsibility to check all e-mails to receive messages sent out by the USM and by the School of Social Work through its MSW Student Listserv. Please make sure that you are signed up for the MSW listserv. You will miss important announcements and communications if you are not on the listserv. You can contact the SSW Administrative Specialist (780-4120) to make sure you are signed up. Also, please keep the School office informed of any changes in your email address, home mailing address, or telephone number.

School of Social Work Website

The School has a web site (<https://usm.maine.edu/swo>) where important and other useful information can be found regarding faculty news, professional social work community news, learning resources, employment information, school events, scholarships, and other items. Students are strongly encouraged to use the school website frequently.

Computing Services

Computing Services offers a variety of services to USM students, faculty and staff, including help desk support, repairs, training, software licensing, student computing support, network services, server maintenance, IT security, application development, and sales. Learn more about Computing Services at <https://usm.maine.edu/computing>.

The Glickman Library: Resources, Readings, and Learning Support

The library has a wide range of resources and services that reflect the most current technology. The School of Social Work has a reference librarian specially designated to support the educational and research needs of social work students and faculty. Pat Prieto the reference librarian can assist you with literature searches and identifying and navigating databases relevant to your academic work.

The faculty may place reading materials on reserve, and reserve readings may also be available electronically. Your instructors will inform you about locating and accessing course readings. In addition to subscriptions to the major social work journals, our library has online search databases and programs. A simple interlibrary loan process provides access to those resources not immediately available at USM.

Learning Commons, located on the second floor of the Glickman Library, provides tutoring and assistance with learning, writing, and technology, and is available to all students who may desire or need such services. Learning Commons also offers private study rooms, which students sometimes use for group activities. There is also a "recording vault" that students may reserve for special projects might involve the use of recording equipment. You can visit

the Learning Commons or see the website for more information:
<https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons>.

Advising

Access to Faculty Advisors

All faculty advisors have offices in Masterton and can be reached by phone or e-mail. Faculty mailboxes are located on the ground level of Masterton. Through their ongoing support, faculty advisors can assist you in overcoming difficulties that you may have in understanding a particular subject matter, progressing toward graduation, or in developing career plans. Students are strongly urged to develop relationships with their advisors and utilize their support and mentorship.

Faculty advisor office hours are posted outside faculty offices. You can also contact your faculty advisor via email to arrange appointments. Please note that faculty may not always be in office during these hours due to attending required meetings or conferences, it is better to contact your faculty advisor to set up an appointment in advance of coming to campus.

Advising Responsibilities

All students are assigned a faculty advisor upon admission to the program and are required to meet with their assigned advisor for overall academic planning before their first registration. Students receive the name and contact information for their advisors in the acceptance letter they receive when admitted to the program. In advising meetings, you can feel free to raise any concerns you might have. Also, advisors will review the curriculum with students, and discuss options available for taking elective courses in light of student interest in direct or macro practice.

Advisors additionally serve as guides who provide academic advice about students' professional development. In addressing students' individual educational plans, advisors are responsible for knowing about University resources that can support students with study skills, tutoring, and other appropriate support services.

Students are encouraged to consult with their advisors throughout the year, and are required to meet with their advisors prior to registering for each semester. It is also important that students maintain their own record of progress through the program, including copies of syllabi, evaluations, and the School's official actions.

Course Registration & SSW Course Scheduling

Registration is done on Mainstreet, students can login and register for courses there. Registration periods are open during set times each semester for the following semester's enrollment. Please refer to the Registrar's website for these dates as they change each year. Students can get assistance with registration through the registrar's office as well. Please note that for field seminars, registration is done automatically by the School of Social Work. This is because students must stay in the same field seminar for both semesters in a given year. Information about classes offered can also be found on Mainstreet. Class offerings are made available on Mainstreet for fall semesters during the previous spring and students register at that time; for spring semester and summer session, class offerings are posted during the previous fall. Please note that you must meet with your advisor each semester before registration and discuss your course plans.

The SSW course offerings and schedule are developed each semester by the SSW faculty, Coordinators, and Director taking into account overall student needs for course times, campus space availability in given semester to conduct classes (collaborating with the Registrar and

the Office of Space and Scheduling), and coordinating faculty schedules for teaching the courses. All efforts are made to offer courses at the best possible times for students.

Faculty Field Liaisons/Field Work Seminar

Faculty teaching the Field Work Seminars are assigned as Faculty Field Liaisons and they advise students regarding the professional content of their field work carried out at the practicum site. They serve as a link between the School and the community, and between the student, classroom, and the agency. They advise students in terms of their progress in relating the knowledge and skills learned in the rest of the curriculum to the field, and in conducting themselves as professionals in relating with their clients and the agency. Field Work Seminar is a year-long commitment for students who remain in the same section of the seminar for two consecutive semesters. Once a member of a field section, students are not allowed to change seminars except under extenuating circumstances, and they must obtain the approval of the Faculty-Field Liaison and the Field Coordinators. Students register initially for a selected seminar that begins in the fall; subsequently, they are registered automatically for the spring semester by the SSW administrative staff. The continuity of the group process in field seminar for the duration of the academic year is a critical component of field education, and it is also important that the Faculty Field Liaison work with the same students and their supervisors in the field settings for the entire year.

Social Work Licensure in Maine

The School of Social Work is committed to supporting students interested in pursuing licensure in Maine. While the School cannot guarantee licensing board decisions and actions regarding any student's application, information and advice regarding licensure is offered as students prepare applications. Taking an advisory role only, the SSW Director schedules an annual presentation at the SSW on licensure for students and often serves as an informal consultant to students with questions about licensure eligibility. Students should make sure to retain copies of all course syllabi during the MSW program as these documents may be requested by the board at the time of licensure application. For specific information regarding licensure laws and rules, students are urged to contact Board of Social Worker Registration directly and explore the board's detailed website:

https://www.maine.gov/pfr/professionallicensing/professional/social_workers/index.htm
Office of Professional and Occupational Regulation, Maine State Board of Social Work Licensure, 35 State House, Station, Augusta, ME. 04333-0035 Phone: 207-624-8603.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)

NASW is the major national professional social work organization working to support the broad interests of social workers and their clients. NASW membership is not required of students, but many students find this professional affiliation to be beneficial to their career development and student memberships to NASW are offered at a reduced rate. This professional affiliation is beneficial for many reasons, including keeping up with issues affecting the profession, participating in NASW events, activities and initiatives, networking, job searching, etc. The Maine Chapter of the NASW is easily accessible and for specific information on the legislative agenda, social work events, and licensure information, please check their website: <https://www.naswmainechapter.com/>. NASW has also developed and revised the social work Code of Ethics that is used to guide practice and set the standards used by licensing boards across the country to evaluate professional conduct. A copy of the NASW Code of Ethics is located at the end of this Handbook (See Appendix A). You can also find it at the national NASW website: <https://www.socialworkers.org/>

Student Records

Mainstreet maintains electronic student academic records, course registration, transcripts, contact information, etc. You can access these records any time by logging on to Mainstreet with your ID. Please review this website for Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) information: <https://usm.maine.edu/registration-services/privacy-records-ferpa>.

Student Organizing Opportunities

Students should connect with their peers through the Social Work Student Organization: <https://usm.maine.edu/swo/social-work-student-organization>. Students are encouraged to become active in the various student organizations at USM:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1ZX9N-5F37zoLYkbFuxa8m_bzULFN1xeJiRdrg3DVTj0/edit#gid+0

Students also have both rights and responsibilities for participating in SSW academic and student affairs matters. In the School of Social Work specifically, MSW students are encouraged to get involved in SSW management by serving as student representatives at monthly faculty meetings, and/or attending curriculum and other committee meetings). Student perspectives are both welcome and needed in these arenas and involvement is an opportunity to ensure student interests are fully considered in SSW decisions and policy-making processes affecting academic and student affairs. If interested in this, please contact the School Director or the MSW Program Coordinator for the meeting schedules.

At the end of the academic year, MSW Coordinator administers the MSW Exit Survey for all Concentration Year students help us make continuous improvements to our program. The purpose is to learn from you how we can improve the graduate student experience and quality of education for our students.

Students are also supported to propose activities and events in the service of student and SSW interests. The MSW Program Coordinator and Director will support students around planning and organizing activities as appropriate.

University Student Support Services

Disability Accommodations

The university is committed to providing students with documented disabilities equal access to all university programs and services. If you think you have a disability and would like to request accommodations, you must register with the Disability Services Center. Timely notification is essential. The Disability Services Center can be reached by calling 207-780-4706 or by email dscusm@maine.edu. If you have already received a faculty accommodation letter from the Disability Services Center, please provide me with that information as soon as possible. Please make a private appointment so that we can review your accommodations.

Tutoring and Writing Assistance

Tutoring at USM is for all students, not just those who are struggling. Tutoring provides active feedback and practice, and is available for writing, math, and many more subjects. Walk-in tutoring is available at the Glickman Library in Portland, the Gorham Library, and the LAC Writing Center. For best service, we recommend making an appointment at <https://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons/schedule-tutoring-appointment>. Questions about tutoring should be directed to Naamah Jarnot at 207-780-4554. Interested in becoming a more effective, efficient learner? Check out <https://usm.maine.edu/agile!>

Counseling

Counseling is available at USM. The best way to schedule an appointment is by phone at 780-5411. More information is available at <https://usm.maine.edu/uhcs>.

Some additional web links of interest are listed below. You are encouraged to get involved in the campus community and seek the support services available to you at USM:

Recovery Oriented Campus Center: <https://usm.maine.edu/recovery-oriented-campus-center>
Student Diversity Centers: <https://usm.maine.edu/student-diversity/multicultural-student-center>

Veterans Services/Veterans Resource Center: <https://usm.maine.edu/veterans/veterans-resource-center>

Campus Safety Report

The University of Southern Maine is committed to making our campuses safer places for students. Because of this commitment, and our federal obligations, faculty and other employees are considered mandated reporters when it comes to experiences of interpersonal violence (sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating or domestic violence, and stalking). Disclosures of interpersonal violence must be passed along to the University's Deputy Title IX Coordinator who can help provide support and academic remedies for students who have been impacted. More information can be found online at <https://usm.maine.edu/campus-safety-project> or by contacting Sarah E. Holmes at sarah.e.holmes1@maine.edu or by calling 207-780-5767.

USM Public Safety

For emergencies, reporting of crimes, sexual assault, or to report suspicious persons and/or maintenance/safety problems, call the **USM Police Department at (207) 780- 5211, or in case of emergency, 911 or (207) 780-5000**. You can also set up text alerts through the USM Alert Emergency Warning System: <https://usm.maine.edu/police/usm-alert-emergency-warning-sytem>.

Storm Closing Information

In case of inclement weather, information on school closings will be announced on local radio and television, as well as on the USM Storm Line at (207) 780-4800 or 780-5034 (TTY). Cancellations are also posted on the University website.

POLICY, PROCEDURES, AND STUDENT RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Structure & Function of Graduate Studies at USM

The Office of Graduate Studies, in collaboration with the Graduate Council and the academic deans, coordinates graduate activities at the University of Southern Maine. The Graduate Council is made up of faculty representatives from each graduate program. The Council provides advice regarding the quality and standards of graduate education, reviews existing and proposed programs, and develops policy and procedures regarding admissions, degree requirements, and related matters. The Director of Graduate Studies oversees this office. Students may request exemption to graduate study policies. Contact the Office of Graduate Studies for the procedures. The office can be reached by phone at (207) 780-4386 or by email at usmgrad@maine.edu

Admissions

In order to be considered for admission into the MSW Program, applicants must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university or expect to be awarded that degree prior to the beginning of their graduate study.

In accordance with the Council on Social Work Education, accreditation standards, The School of Social Work does not grant social work course credit for life experience.

Criteria for Admission

Acceptance in the graduate program is competitive. The deadline for application is October 15th. The graduate program in social work seeks candidates whose baccalaureate preparation, scholastic achievement, professional experience, interest, motivation, and references are predictive of a successful completion of the degree requirements. Each student's application for admission will be reviewed based on the following evaluation standards:

1. Minimum GPA of 3.0 or above in undergraduate study and a student's major;
2. Minimum GPA of 3.0 or above in any previous graduate work in social work;
3. Personal essay of 750 words following the outline provided by the School of Social Work and available through the Graduate Admissions Office;
4. Three recent professional and academic letters of reference reflecting on both social service-related work experience (paid or volunteer) and academic achievement
5. Minimum of 18 credit hours in liberal arts;
6. Minimum of 9 credits in social sciences, including introductory courses in psychology and sociology
7. A statistics course;
8. For Advanced Standing admissions, applicants must submit their final field evaluation from a BSW program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

For more information about the application review process, please refer to the SSW website (<https://usm.maine.edu/swo>) where you will find a number of links with resources i.e. "Prospective Students FAQ's" and "MSW Application Process" which includes "Tips for a Strong application", that provide specific and detailed information about all aspects of the application process, criteria used, and decision making.

Transfer Students

Transferring to the USM SSW from another CSWE accredited MSW program is not an automatic decision but rather one is made through the regular admissions process. Students who are matriculated in an accredited MSW program may apply for admission through USM Graduate Admissions through the regular application process by the deadline (October 15th). Students in this situation are encouraged to contact the MSW Program Coordinator in advance to facilitate a smooth application process and to discuss course credit transfer. If students have received a B grade or better in foundation year courses taken in another MSW program (within the past 7 years), it is likely that credit will be granted for those courses at USM, if accepted into the program. However, any credits for transfer need to be approved by the MSW Coordinator who will request specific information about the courses (e.g., syllabi) to assess equivalencies to USM SSW courses.

Application Review Process

The Admissions Committee is overseen by the Chair of Admissions who is also MSW Program Coordinator. The Committee itself consists of faculty and field staff members who read and evaluate applicant files based on the criteria listed above.

Notifying Applicants of Admissions Decisions

All admissions decisions are finalized by the end of December. Students can expect a formal letter regarding the admission decision in January or sooner. The acceptance letter contains important information regarding any conditions that are associated with admission (e.g., need for additional course work, final transcript, etc.). Accepted applicants will also be informed of the date by which they must reply and submit a deposit to hold a seat. The name of the faculty advisor is also provided along with instructions about enrollment and matriculation.

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of graduate assistantships are available to graduate social work students admitted each academic year. Graduate Assistants must carry a minimum of 6 credits per semester. Duties may involve assisting with faculty's research, teaching, and related projects. Also, graduate assistants and aides carry out administrative tasks for the School's Director and administrative staff.

Scholarships

A number of scholarships may be available to MSW students. All scholarships are awarded through Office of Graduate Studies. Please visit this link for more information: <https://usm.maine.edu/scholarships/graduate-studies-scholarship>, or email usmgrad@maine.edu.

Reporting Criminal Background

As part of the USM Graduate Program Application, applicants are required to respond to a question about the presence of a criminal background. An affirmative response to this question is in no way considered in the decision to accept or deny an applicant for admission to the program. An affirmative response does however have special importance for professional schools like social work. Accepted MSW students with a criminal record need to be aware that many field agencies require formal criminal background checks and it is best that students are forthcoming and honest about this before it is discovered through a formal process. While some agencies have policies that disallow accepting students or employees with a criminal background, the USM SSW will assist students in this situation to seek a field placement without this prohibition. This said, while it is not impossible to find a field setting for students with a criminal background, it is a reality that fieldwork options are limited for these students.

It is also important for students with a criminal background to know that the state social work licensing board may deny you a license based on this. At the time of licensure application, you will undergo an investigation of the type of criminal background you have and any associated resolutions. It is entirely the decision of the licensing board to grant or deny a social work license based on these findings and the USM SSW has no influence over the outcome.

If you are an accepted or matriculated student, you can discuss any concerns you may have about your criminal background and its impact on your education and training with either your advisor or the MSW Program Coordinator. You should also inform the Field

Coordinator of your situation before you are referred for fieldwork interviews so that you can be sent to appropriate settings. The SSW will support your education and training in any way we can. If you are an applicant to the program, you can contact the MSW Program Coordinator to discuss this further in advance of applying.

Four Year Degree Completion Requirement

To meet the CSWE accreditation standards, all students have four years from their date of entry into the MSW program to complete the 61-credit hours of the degree requirements. Any student who cannot comply with this time limit for earning the degree and has a legitimate reason for not being able to complete all degree requirements within 4 years may petition for an extension. The petition for extension should be approved by the advisor and sent to the MSW Coordinator for consideration. Note: USM has a continuous enrollment and residency policy for graduate students. Please see the Graduate Catalog for details:

<https://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/2018-19/table-contents-0>.

Adding and Dropping Classes

During the first two weeks of a semester, students may add or drop courses. Please refer to the registrar's website for the add/drop/withdrawal periods and policies:

<https://usm.maine.edu/registration-services/addingdroppingwithdrawal>

MSW Field Education Program

The Field Education Program at USM's School of Social Work provides students with the opportunity to apply theoretical concepts and principles into Advanced Social Work practice through field practicum. The major goal of field education is to prepare students for competence in social work practice by helping them develop the knowledge and skills they will need to assume a range of professional roles. A Field Work Manual that covers many aspects of field education and policies related to field work can be accessed on-line through the USM SSW website.

Once students are accepted into the program and confirm that they plan to attend full time, they are required to set up a meeting with one of the Field Coordinators to begin the field placement process. This process begins in January/February each year to place students for the fall semester. Field placements are competitive and it is important to begin early. Accepted students receive instructions about this with Field Coordinator contact information in their acceptance letters. Students entering the concentration year should pay attention to the MSW Listserv for an announcement about the scheduling of field work meeting to discuss fall placements.

Graduation Requirements

To be eligible for graduation from the MSW program, a student must:

- Complete satisfactorily the total number of graduate credit hours required in the program with a minimum of 3.0 GPA. All required courses completed for the MSW program must be passed with a minimum grade of B-.
- Complete satisfactorily all program degree requirements including field education components.
- Submit a completed online application for graduation to the Registrar on Mainestreet Student Center: <https://usm.maine.edu/registration-services/apply-graduate>. This

application generates your graduation certification that is needed in order to process your official diploma.

Certification for Graduation

Once the graduation certification form is received in the School of Social Work, faculty advisors are responsible for certifying each advisee's fulfillment of graduation requirements. The certification form is then sent to the Registrar's office for processing.

Commencement Ceremony

The School of Social Work strongly encourages students to participate in this important event. More details about tickets and order of regalia will be sent to your @maine.edu email address as graduation draws near.

ACADEMIC POLICIES, GRADING, EVALUATION OF ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE & ENROLLMENT

Grading Standards

Students must maintain a cumulative 3.0 GPA in all course work in the program in order to remain in good standing and be eligible for a MSW degree. Students must receive a minimum of B- grade in all courses. Students receiving a grade below B- in a core course must retake the course and receive a passing grade. Students who fall below 3.0 GPA will be placed on academic probation. If the student fails to bring the overall GPA up to a minimum of 3.0 by the end of the following semester, she/he may be dismissed from the MSW program. In addition, advanced standing students who fail to receive a minimum grade of a B- in a practice course will be withdrawn from field placement and will lose her/his advanced standing status. The student, upon losing the advanced standing status, may continue in the MSW program as a regular two-year student.

Student academic performance is graded in accordance with Graduate School grading policy as outlined in Graduate Academic Policies: <https://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/2018-19/academic-policies-graduate>. The detail of specific performance criteria is available on SSW course syllabi or through instructors. Student professional performance is assessed at the end of each semester using the Field Evaluation. The Faculty-Field Liaison (Field Seminar Instructor) issues a final course grade that accounts for student professional performance. Based on the NASW Code of Ethics, student professional behavior is expected in fieldwork and in the classroom, and it is taken into account in addition to the course grades in assessing student work and participation.

Grade Appeal Policy

The purpose of the academic grade appeal policy is to provide a fair and speedy review of all student appeals of academic grades in graduate/professional programs at the University of Southern Maine. This policy will permit such appeals to be determined in a manner that reflects the interests of both the student and the instructor. For specific policies and procedures for following this academic grade appeal policy, refer to Academic Policies in the Graduate Catalog website: <https://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/2018-19/academic-policies-graduate>.

Incomplete Grades

A grade of Incomplete (I) indicates that a portion of the required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to an unforeseen, but fully justified, reason. If you find that you must request an incomplete grade because of an emergency situation, contact your instructor promptly. Instructors require that you request an incomplete grade in advance of the end of the semester and will determine if the Incomplete is warranted. Instructors have no obligation to grant an Incomplete grade and will do so only under extenuating circumstances. If your instructor grants you additional time to complete assignments, she or he will clarify the conditions and timeline for completion with you in writing. An incomplete grade not changed within the following semester automatically converts to an F. Remember, the right to grant an incomplete is with the instructor, not the student. Students with three incomplete grades will not be allowed to register for any additional courses. It is especially important to note that a student with an incomplete in a field or practice course will not be permitted to enroll in subsequent field or practice courses. This can be a serious matter because a student with an incomplete in practice or field seminar cannot attend field placement the following semester. All incomplete work for Field Work and Practice courses must be successfully completed before the beginning of the next semester in order to continue in the program.

Continuous Enrollment & Leave of Absence

Students are expected to be enrolled continuously in the MSW program. However, students planning to temporarily withdraw from the program are allowed to apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA). The student should complete and submit the LOA form to the MSW Coordinator, stating the reasons for the request and the plans for return. The LOA is permitted for up to one academic year, unless special permission has been granted to extend beyond that parameter. In most cases, if a student takes a LOA and does not return in a year, re-application to the program is required. Students intending to permanently withdraw should also write a letter to MSW Coordinator and complete an official withdrawal form in the Registrar's Office. Leave of Absence Forms can be found by following this [link](#)

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 Academic Integrity Policy is available at the Dean of Students website: <https://usm.maine.edu/community-standards-mediation/academic-integrity>.

American Psychological Association (APA) Writing Style

Academic writing in social work utilizes the current APA format. All students are required and expected to use this format for papers and assignments. The APA publishes a guidebook on APA format writing and there are web links available that offer examples of how to write using this style. APA format is especially important in properly citing and referencing sources of literature used in your writing. The APA website has more information about obtaining a manual and learning to write in this format: <http://www.apastyle.org/>

Problem Resolution Meeting and Academic Review: Policies & Procedures

Difficulties between a student, a faculty member, Faculty Field Liaison, and/or Field Instructor are handled within the School of Social Work. If field work 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-Solving Meeting or an Academic Review will be arranged, depending on the gravity and acuity of the situation. The procedure is outlined as follows:

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.

Purpose of and Reasons to convene an 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 or the matter at hand is beyond the scope of a Problem Resolution Meeting.

The issues that are the focus of an Academic Review are often related to problems that emerge in field work. 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 or in a Problem Solving Meeting;
- 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.

Academic Review Procedures:

1. An Academic Review is requested.

a. 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 brought to the SSW Director. The first step is to involve the MSW Program Coordinator.

2. An Academic Review is scheduled.

a. The Academic Review is called by the MSW Coordinator. The MSW 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.

b. 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.

c. 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 MSW Coordinator in advance of the meeting the name of the person attending. Lawyers representing students are not allowed to attend Academic Review meetings.

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

3. An Academic Review is held.

a. The MSW Program Coordinator serves as Chair of the Academic Review and facilitates the meeting.

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

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

d. The meeting usually takes one hour (a bit more or less, depending on the situation). Once the discussion has come to a close, the student and the support person are asked to leave the room and the Academic Review Committee remains to discuss what was learned and make a decision about the outcome.

e. A letter summarizing the academic review and the outcome is prepared by the MSW Program 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.

f. 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.

g. 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*

- a. Nothing in this policy statement is intended to interfere with or deny any right guaranteed to a student by the University of Southern Maine.

Academic Review 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 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.

Academic and Professional Dismissal

Students are expected to maintain high academic and professional standards. As noted in the Graduate Catalog, "If a student has not made satisfactory progress towards fulfilling degree requirements, he or she may be withdrawn from the University by the program director or department chair." Students in the MSW program who fall below 3.0 GPA for two consecutive semesters may be dismissed from the program.

Knowledge, skill, and value expectations are all part of academic development in a professional program as they relate to a student's performance as a social work practitioner. In the social work program, professional reasons for dismissal include violations of the NASW Code of Ethics; breach of the USM sexual harassment, sexual assault, or diversity policies; lack of academic integrity; plagiarism; and/or goodness of fit/suitability for the profession of social work. Please refer to Academic Graduate Policy website for specific details on withdrawal policy: <https://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/2018-19/academic-policies-graduate>.

Examples of lack of goodness of fit/suitability for the social work profession include, but are not limited to:

- Inability to form professional relationships;
- Inability to uphold professional boundaries with clients, faculty, or other students;
- Exploitations of clients;
- Violations of confidentiality;
- Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships;
- Unable to demonstrate non-judgmental attitude;
- Unable to foster client self-determination;
- Disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty or staff (at school, the university, or field placement);
- Violation of any part of the NASW code of ethics;

- Practicing, facilitating, collaborating, or condoning any form of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, class, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability;
- Participating in or condoning dishonest, fraud, or deception;
- Allowing personal problems, psychological 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 professional responsibility;
- Failure to accurately represent themselves in reference to their student status; and
- Inability to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity, or emotional stability requisite for professional practice.

Students are responsible for learning the NASW Code of Ethics during their course of study in the MSW program. A copy of the Code is available at the end of this handbook. The Code of Ethics is discussed in foundation year coursework and integrated explicitly and implicitly throughout the MSW curriculum. You are required to sign a form at the time of admission that you have read and will abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.

Appeals of Dismissal or Withdrawal

Within 14 days following the student's receipt of a letter from the School's director about a decision to be dismissed or withdrawn from the program, the student may appeal the decision in writing to the Dean of the College of Management and Human Service. The Dean will investigate the reasons for the appeal and an outcome decision shall be rendered within three weeks. This decision is final in the appeal process. Please refer to the Graduate Policy on appeals for more information: <https://usm.maine.edu/catalogs/2018-19/academic-policies-graduate>

USM POLICIES REGARDING STUDENT LIFE:

USM Student Code of Conduct

In addition to the NASW Code of Ethics that establishes guidelines for professional social work, USM has a Student Conduct Code. Students are expected to be familiar with this Code. The complete document can be found on the USM website at: <https://usm.maine.edu/community-standards-mediation/academic-integrity>.

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 veterans' status in employment, education, and all other areas of the University.

Aids Policy

The USM AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) policy has been established to protect the rights of individuals infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) and the health and safety of all others at the institution. USM will not discriminate in any manner against any person who is infected with HIV, including admissions, facilities access, hiring, housing, promotion, tenure or termination. USM will not require HIV testing for either its

students or employees and information about suspected or known HIV infection will be kept confidential. For more information or advice regarding this policy, call 207-780-4211.

Title IX Policy

Sexual harassment of either employees or students is a violation of federal and state laws. It is the policy of the University of Maine System that no member of the University community may sexually harass another. In accordance with its policy of complying with non-discrimination laws, the University of Maine System will regard freedom from sexual harassment as an individual employee and student right which will be safeguarded as a matter of policy. Any employee or student will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this policy.

Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when: submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment or education; submission to or rejection of such contact by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the individual; or such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's academic or work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment.

Consenting relationships may constitute sexual harassment under this policy. When a professional power differential exists between members of the University of Maine System and a romantic or sexual relationship develops, there is a potential for abuse of that power, even in relationships of apparent mutual consent. A faculty or staff member should not engage in such relationships. Further, the University prohibits the abuse of power in romantic or sexual relationships.

To assure that power is not abused and to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment, a faculty or staff member must eliminate any current or potential conflict of interest by removing himself or herself from decisions affecting the other person in the relationship. Decisions affecting the other person include grading, evaluating, supervising, or otherwise influencing that person's education, employment, housing, or participation in athletics or any other University activity.

Sexual Assault Policy

The University of Southern Maine expressly prohibits and will not tolerate sexual assault, as defined by USM in this policy. These behaviors all constitute violations of the Student Conduct Code, and will be met with appropriate sanctions, up to and including dismissal. Many are also violations of the laws of the State of Maine, and violating individuals may be prosecuted criminally. For a complete copy of the University of Southern Maine Sexual Assault Policy, visit the website: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/ocs/policy-sexual-assault>

Alcohol and Other Drugs Policy

The University of Southern Maine views alcohol and substance abuse as a serious problem both nationally and on campus and wishes to do everything possible to address this critical issue. In compliance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act and the Drug Free Workplace Act passed by Congress, USM has Alcohol and Other Drug Policy that can be

accessed at the following website:

<https://usm.maine.edu/sites/default/files/deanofstudents/USMAODpolicy.pdf>

The Recovery Oriented Campus Center (ROCC) at the University of Southern Maine is about establishing peer support to build a supportive community for students in recovery from substance use and other mental health conditions. The ROCC is a place where students enter to reconnect with themselves, each other, and their community; while also exploring their academic potential and the boundless opportunities that await them in a life of recovery. You can learn more about ROCC at the following website: <https://usm.maine.edu/recovery-oriented-campus-center/overview>

APPENDIX A: National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics

Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers Approved 1996: NASW

Delegate Assembly; Revised 2008: NASW Delegate Assembly

PLEASE NOTE: It is the responsibility of ALL social work students to read and learn the NASW Code of Ethics. It is provided for you here in the MSW Handbook for your convenience.

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing 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 wellbeing in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

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

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

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

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

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

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

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

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

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. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this Code 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.

Ethical Principles

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

Value: Service

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

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

Value: Social Justice

Ethical Principle: Social workers challenge social injustice.

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

Value: Dignity and Worth of the Person

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

Value: Importance of Human Relationships

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

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the wellbeing 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.

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

1.1 Commitment to Clients

- a. Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the wellbeing 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.)

1.2 Self-Determination

- a. 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.

1.3 Informed Consent

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

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

1.4 Competence

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

1.5 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

- a. Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- b. Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- c. Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity,

national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

1.6 *Conflicts of Interests*

- 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.

1.7 *Privacy and Confidentiality*

- a. Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.
- b. Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.
- c. Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential

does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

- d. Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.
- e. Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients' circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker/client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.
- f. When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. 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, employers, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.
- h. Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.
- i. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
- j. Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.
- k. Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

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

1.8 Access to Records

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

1.9 Sexual Relationships

- a. Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.
- b. Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close

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

- c. Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers—not their clients—who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.
- d. Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

- a. 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

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

1.12 Derogatory Language

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

1.13 Payment for Services

- a. When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.
- b. Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients.

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

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

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

- a. 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

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

1.16 Termination of Services

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

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.1 Respect

- a. Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- b. Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.
- c. Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the wellbeing of clients.

2.2 Confidentiality

- a. 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.

2.3 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- a. Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the wellbeing 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 wellbeing.

2.4 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.

2.5 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.

2.6 *Referral for Services*

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

2.7 *Sexual Relationships*

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

2.8 *Sexual Harassment*

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

2.9 *Impairment of Colleagues*

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

2.10 *Incompetence of Colleagues*

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

2.11 *Unethical Conduct of Colleagues*

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

3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.1 *Supervision and Consultation*

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

3.2 *Education and Training*

- a. Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and

competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

- b. Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.
- c. Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.
- d. Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.3 *Performance Evaluation*

- a. 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.

3.4 *Clients Records*

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

3.5 *Billing*

- a. 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.

3.6 *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. (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.

3.7 *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.

3.8 *Continuing Education and Staff Development*

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

3.9 *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

4.1 *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.

4.2 *Discrimination*

- a. 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 disability.

4.3 *Private conduct*

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

4.4 *Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception*

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

4.5 *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.

4.6 *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 and 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.

4.7 *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.

4.8 *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

5.1 *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.

5.2 *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' wellbeing, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- f. When evaluation 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.
- g. Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.
- h. Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- i. Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- j. Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.

- k. Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.
- l. Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity 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.
- m. Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- n. Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.
- o. Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- p. Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.1 Social Welfare

- a. 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.

6.2 Public Participation

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

6.3 Public Emergencies

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

6.4 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 disability.