

# **MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**School of Social Work**



**California State University, San Bernardino**

**Academic Year  
2025-2026**



# CSUSB School of Social Work

## MSW Student Handbook Review Documentation

**To all First Year social work students:**  
**This form is available via Qualtrics. Please go to this webpage to**  
**complete:**

[MSW Student Handbook Review Documentation](#)



I have read and understand:

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| 1. The CSUSB School of Social Work Mission   | Yes___ No___ |
| 2. The MSW Curriculum  | Yes___ No___ |
| 3. Course and Grading Policies   | Yes___ No___ |
| 4. Student Advising  | Yes___ No___ |
| 5. Policies for Review of Academic Performance   | Yes___ No___ |
| 6. Professional Associations   | Yes___ No___ |
| 7. Graduation and Beyond   | Yes___ No___ |
| 8. People, Places and Policies   | Yes___ No___ |
| 9. The NASW Code of Ethics (on the NASW Webpage)   | Yes___ No___ |
| 10. Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication  | Yes___ No___ |
| 11. I have read the section on plagiarism in the CSUSB Course Catalog, the Section 4.08 (Acknowledging Credit) of the NASW Code of Ethics ( <a href="https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English">https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English</a> ), and have reviewed the following websites on plagiarism: <a href="http://www.plagiarism.org">http://www.plagiarism.org</a> and <a href="https://youtu.be/PzZsButRaHs">https://youtu.be/PzZsButRaHs</a> (GCFLearnFree) and commit to abiding by these policies. | Yes___ No___ |
| 12. My advisor is: _____   |              |

You must read all the chapters listed. If you mark "No" because you cannot understand a chapter, please make an appointment with your academic advisor for review. This form should be completed by **September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025**.



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the MSW Program at California State University, San Bernardino. This handbook is intended to be a central location for information on school policies, procedures, and commonly asked questions. Becoming familiar with the contents of this handbook may well save you time and trouble as you proceed through the MSW Program. You should also become familiar with other important sources of information such as the Course Catalog (located at :<https://catalog.csusb.edu>), and the School of Social Work website (located at: <https://www.csusb.edu/social-work>). The MSW Handbook is available on the School of Social Work MSW website.

The MSW Program is administered by the School of Social Work, which is a unit within the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SB-207). Policies set by the College and by the Office of Graduate Studies (CE-356) apply to the MSW Program. Graduate Studies policies are especially relevant to our MSW students and are contained in the Course Catalog and at <https://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies>.

Please be aware that policies summarized in this handbook and elsewhere are constantly subject to review and revision. Information in the handbook supersedes that in the [Course Catalog](#). In addition, it is very important that you stay in close communication with the School of Social Work for the most current information.

All social work students are expected to read this handbook, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>), and the plagiarism documents. Students will complete the MSW Student Handbook Review Documentation form at the front of the handbook (link to the Qualtrics survey is provided there). It confirms that students have read, understand, and commit to abiding by the policies and procedures identified in these documents.

## MISSION

CSUSB MSW program mission is to provide accessible, dynamic, and rigorous academic programs that prepares students with generalist and advanced generalist values, knowledge and practice skills to effectively enhance the well-being of the diverse populations and communities of our region, state and world.

- We enhance social work educational opportunities for students within our region and in unserved areas through increasing accessibility and program completion, especially for first generation college students, students from the dynamically evolving ethnic communities in our region, and students in remote areas.
- We continually update curriculum and teaching practices with current research and best practices reflective of the needs and trends of our region, nationally and globally.
- We offer and measure attainment of a competency-based Generalist and Advanced Generalist level curriculum, consistent with the needs of our area, for practice skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities and the skills of policy advocacy.
- We offer a curriculum that emphasizes practice consistent with the aims and values of the social work profession and that meets the needs of diverse, vulnerable, and underserved populations, especially in our region.
- We support faculty in providing leadership to the profession and to the community with their research and expertise.

The MSW Program views its mission as being tightly bound to the educational needs of the region. The MSW Program addresses these regional needs through a curriculum that emphasizes agency based practice and service to under-represented, under-served and inappropriately served populations. In the generalist year, a generalist framework for micro and macro practice is introduced, emphasizing key concepts including the person-in-environment systems theory, and parallel problem-solving strategies at multiple levels of intervention. Issues are explored in the context of agency-based practice. Most placements are in public agencies.

Prior to the beginning of the advanced generalist year, students identify a specialization. This can be an area of practice, a client group or a social welfare problem. All students then take the advanced generalist micro and macro practice sequences of courses and apply the knowledge and skills to their chosen specialization. The advanced generalist practice year focuses on three social work roles: change agent, interagency/interdisciplinary collaborator, and leader. The advanced generalist micro practice sequence addresses these roles in terms of interventions with individuals, families and groups while the advanced generalist macro practice sequence of courses addresses them in terms of interventions with organizations and communities, including policy practice in both contexts.

The MSW Program is designed to graduate advanced generalist social workers who are capable of filling gaps in a wide range of professional roles within a variety of agency settings. The majority of our graduates remain in the region and will increase the capacity of the local social work community to provide professional services available in the region.



## **EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

The CSUSB School of Social Work envisions social work education as a cooperative venture. Faculty are expected to provide a high-quality generalist and advanced generalist social work education and students are expected to be active, responsible learners as they become social work professionals.

Class attendance is highly valued in our program. The interaction between professors and students and between students is a critical part of the learning process in social work education. Students are expected to attend all class meetings.

Class participation is highly valued in our program. Students are expected to participate in all class activities, ask questions, and contribute to class discussions in meaningful ways. Reading is highly valued in our program.

Writing is highly valued in our program. Social work agencies require their professional level employees to produce written documents such as psychosocial evaluations, reports to the court, grant proposals, or new policies and/or regulations. Students are expected to be able to write at a professional level by the time they leave our program. The written work will be graded on content as well as adherence to good academic writing style and fundamental mechanics.

Respectful behavior is highly valued in our program. Respect for the dignity and worth of the person is one of the major ethical principles of the social work profession. Students are expected to respect opinions, lifestyles, and values that may be different than their own. Students are also expected to engage in respectful classroom behaviors such as arriving on time, remaining in each class until it is scheduled to end, not having "side bar" conversations during class, and following the classroom rules set by the instructor.

Input is highly valued in our program. At various times students will be asked to complete questionnaires related to their opinions about individual classes or the program as a whole. Faculty members take the responses on these questionnaires seriously and constructive input, in the form of thoughtful and well written commentary, is very useful in making needed changes.

Learning is highly valued in our program. We believe that class attendance, participation, reading, writing, respectful behavior, and input all contribute to the quality of our social work program.

Fun is highly valued in our program. A social work graduate program can be quite a challenge. There are a number of opportunities in class and in other school gatherings to have a good time, get to know other students and faculty, and to recharge your batteries. Work hard and have fun.

## CHAPTER 1 – CURRICULUM

The Master of Social Work Program at California State University, San Bernardino has an Advanced Generalist Concentration. Students take equal numbers of Micro and Macro Practice courses. Graduates are able to facilitate change on micro, mezzo, and macro practice levels. The Master of Social Work (MSW) degree is divided into a **generalist curriculum** and an **advanced generalist curriculum**. The generalist and advanced generalist curriculum requires the completion of 60 semester credits of study (or 35 semester credits for Advanced Standing students). The CSUSB School of Social Work offers three program models: a two-year model and a three-year model with the same curricula, and an Advanced Standing Program for qualified BASW graduates where portions of the generalist curriculum are waived. This curriculum is offered on the San Bernardino (SBC) and Palm Desert Campuses (PDC), as well as primarily online in our Pathway program through the College of Extended and Global Education (CEGE). The timing and sequencing of particular courses for these models are described in the next section. Plans of study for each program option are available on the School of Social Work website.

Note: Students wishing to change program options must contact their academic advisor. The advisor will discuss this request with the MSW Program Coordinator, the Director of Practicum Education, the IV-E Project Coordinator and/ or any other relevant party. Permission to change program options is granted based on availability of space in the chosen program option, appropriate plan to complete practicum, and timing of the request. In cases where students want to move into the two-year model, the change can only happen before the student begins the MSW.

### Generalist Curriculum

The generalist curriculum builds on a liberal arts base, required for admission to the MSW program, to provide a common professional core for all students as well as preparation for advanced generalist study in the second half of the program. Initial generalist courses cover the essential knowledge, values, processes, and skills of generalist social work practice. They also introduce current issues in a range of areas of practice, thus preparing students to make informed choices regarding specialized study in the advanced generalist (concentration) courses.

Courses cover micro, mezzo, and macro practice, human behavior and the social environment (HBSE), and social work research concomitant with a year-long practicum placement. To identify the courses you must take, please see your program option's plan of study posted on the School's MSW website. Required generalist courses include the following:

#### HBSE

SW 6041: Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Lifespan Development (3 units)

SW 6042: Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Critical Topics (3 units)

#### Generalist Micro Practice

SW 6021: Generalist Micro Practice I (3 units)

SW 6022: Generalist Micro Practice II (3 units)

### **Generalist Macro Practice**

SW 6061: Generalist Macro Practice I (3 units)

SW 6062: Generalist Macro Practice II (3 units)

### **Research**

SW 6011: Social Work Research I (3 units)

### **Practicum**

SW 6181: Generalist Practicum I (4 units)

SW 6082: Generalist Practicum II (3 units)

The generalist year practicum is 16 hours per week of supervised work at a social service agency in the community. This includes a three-hour seminar every month for a total of eight seminars.

### **Electives**

Two elective courses are required. See electives section below.

### **Advanced Standing Students and Generalist Coursework**

Qualified BASW students admitted to the Advanced Generalist Program are waived from the following generalist curriculum courses: SW 6011: Social Work Research I (3 units)

SW 6021: Generalist Micro Practice I (3 units)

SW 6022: Generalist Micro Practice II (3 units)

SW 6041: Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Lifespan Development (3 units)

SW 6042: Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Critical Topics (3 units)

SW 6061: Generalist Macro Practice I (3 units)

SW 6062: Generalist Macro Practice II (3 units)

SW 6181: Generalist Practicum I (4 units)

SW 6182: Generalist Practicum II (3 units)

One Elective

In lieu of these courses, Advanced Standing Students take the following summer bridge coursework the summer before starting the Advanced Generalist Curriculum:

SW 6015: Social Work Research Bridge (2 units)

SW 6035: Generalist Practice Bridge (3 units)

SW 6085: Generalist Practicum Bridge (1 unit)

### **Advanced Generalist Curriculum**

Building on the model in the generalist year, students move on to education for advanced practice in the second or third year. All students take both the micro practice and the macro practice series of courses. They learn three advanced generalist social

work practice roles: change agent, interdisciplinary or interagency social worker, social work leader.

## **SPECIALIZATIONS**

By their advanced generalist year, students select a **specialization** to which they will apply their advanced generalist micro and macro practice learning. Please see Appendix D: Specialization Information for more information about what a specialization is and how to choose one.

To summarize, students learn about Advanced Generalist social work practice in the three roles of change agent, interdisciplinary/interagency practitioner and social work leader with particular reference to their chosen specializations. They learn interventions at all levels of practice: individual, family, group, organization and community. Courses required of all students in the second year are the following:

### **Advanced Generalist Micro Practice**

SW 6023: Advanced Generalist Micro Practice I (3 units)  
SW 6023: Advanced Generalist Micro Practice II (3 units)

### **Advanced Generalist Macro Practice**

SW 6063: Advanced Generalist Macro Practice I (3 units)  
SW 6064: Advanced Generalist Macro Practice II (3 units)

### **Research**

SW 6012: Social Work Research II (3 units)  
SW 6016: Social Work Research III (3 units).

Students who want to complete independent data collection and analysis will take the following courses after completion of SW 6012

SW 6113: Research Project I (3 units)  
SW 6114: Research Project II (3 units)(replaces one elective course)

### **Elective**

See note on electives below.

### **Practicum**

SW 6183: Advanced Generalist Practicum I (4 units)  
SW 6184: Advanced Generalist Practicum II (4 units)

In the Advanced Generalist Year, students are placed in a community agency for 20 hours per week, which includes a three-hour seminar approximately once a month, for a total of eight seminars.

## **General Curriculum Explanations**

### **Electives**

The MSW Program includes two elective courses. One is taken as part of the Generalist curriculum and the second in the Advanced Generalist curriculum. Electives

are offered in the School of Social Work as individually named courses or as SW 5900, SW 6901, SW 6902 courses. Students will need to take two (one for Advanced Standing) electives while in the MSW program. Students may also petition their academic advisor to accept other courses, 5000 level or higher, to fulfil MSW elective requirements, although MSW required courses cannot fulfil elective requirements. Students must take different courses than were taken while in their bachelor's degree.

## **Practicum**

Two separate practicum placements totaling 1080 hours of supervised work in local agencies are required for the MSW degree. The Generalist placement is two days a week for two semesters (480 hours); and the Advanced Generalist placement is two and a half days a week for two semesters (600 hours). The Practicum includes participation by all students in a seminar which meets once each month for three hours. Students who miss a seminar session must arrange a make-up assignment with the seminar instructor.

Practicum is an integral sequence of the MSW curriculum. The practicum setting provides an opportunity to integrate social work theory with practice. For this reason, practicum must be undertaken concurrently with practice methods courses. **Please see the CSUSB School of Social Work Practicum Education Manual for detailed information about practicum placement requirements.**

**While enrolled in a practicum, students must carry professional liability insurance. This is provided by CSUSB and is paid for through student fees.**

## **Criminal Background Checks (Live Scan) and Arrests**

The university does not conduct criminal background checks on students. However, criminal background checks are commonly required, as part of the onboarding process, for persons placed in many settings. Any criminal record (infraction, charge, misdemeanor or felony) may make a student ineligible for placement in certain agencies. Students are advised that a lack of disclosure about a criminal background during the agency interview process may result in a denial of placement at some agencies. We recommended that students with any level of criminal background openly discuss the specific situation with their designated program Practicum Coordinator during their pre-placement meeting so they can get a better understanding of the potential challenges of placement.

Students may be ineligible for placement or may be terminated from an agency if criminal background information comes to light without prior disclosure. The Director of Practicum Education or the designated program Practicum Coordinator can provide insight on opportunities and barriers to securing a practicum site but cannot guarantee placement or choice of placement. Information disclosed will be used only for the purpose of determining appropriate practicum options. If a student cannot be placed in practicum, they will not be able to continue in the MSW Program.

If a student is arrested, charged with, or convicted of a new offense during the MSW program, the student is required to disclose this information to the Director of the School of Social Work, Director of Practicum Education, designated Practicum Coordinator, and Academic Advisor within 48 hours of arrest, charge or conviction.

Students may be terminated from the program if an arrest or charge comes to light without immediate disclosure.

Failure to provide the required disclosure will be deemed deception and will be handled as a form of academic dishonesty in addition to any other consequences. Arrests, violations, or convictions which violate university and/or department policies or standards could result in sanctions. Please see the NASW Code of Ethics section 4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud and Deception.

Students who are arrested, charged, or convicted during the program are not permitted to return to placement until further notice. The student will be referred to the Student Review Committee for an initial review of the situation. The student assumes the risk involved with disclosing information and thus may choose not to disclose information. However, if the student chooses not to disclose information, the Student Review Committee will not be able to determine a course of action based on the program guidelines and the NASW Code of Ethics.

If a student is charged with a new offense, the student will most likely be required to take a leave of absence until the case has been resolved and a decision has been made by a court of law. A student may be permitted to complete classroom course work for the current semester. Once the outcome of the specific case or circumstance has been determined, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Director of the School of Social Work, Director of Practicum Education, designated Practicum Coordinator, and Academic Advisor. At that time, the student will be referred to the Student Review Committee again for consideration of specific factors and implications related to the social work profession and his/her ability to return to the program and practicum work.

## **Transfer of Credit**

### **Policies on transfer credit and waivers**

MSW students are subject to the policies for Graduate Studies which may be found in the Course Catalog <https://catalog.csusb.edu/>. The following are additional policies of the School of Social Work. When the School's policies are more restrictive than Graduate Studies, those of the School are enforced.

- i. The School of Social Work does not give course credit for life experience or previous work experience.
- ii. *Transfer credit from other social work programs:* Students seeking to transfer from another CSWE accredited school may be admitted if space is available and we are permitted to contact the prior program to ensure the student was in good standing. Up to 30% of MSW coursework may be transferred from an accredited MSW program. Only passing graduate level grades will be accepted ("B" grade or better). Course equivalents and the specific program of work required to complete degree requirements at CSUSB are determined by the MSW Program Coordinator in consultation with social work faculty teaching in the relevant curriculum committee, the

Director, and/ or the Associate Director of the School of Social Work. Once a determination is made of which coursework can be transferred, and the coursework it will substitute in the CSUSB MSW curriculum, a determination will be made in writing. These substitutions will be reflected in the Advancement to Candidacy program plan.

iii. *From other departments at CSUSB or other universities:* In lieu of taking the elective courses in the social work curriculum, students may apply 6 units of relevant 5000-level or higher (graduate level) course work from other disciplines with approval from their academic advisor. A course waiver form must be submitted to avoid problems with university records. Coursework completed and used for another completed degree will not be considered.

iv. Students completing a BASW from a CSWE accredited program who are admitted into the Advanced Standing program will have the generalist coursework waived after completion of SW 6015, SW 6035, and SW 6085.

## **Timeline for Degree Completion**

The MSW Program must be completed within a seven-year period. Requests for extensions of this timeline must be approved by the School of Social Work and Graduate Studies. Students requesting an extension of the timeline must contact the MSW Program Coordinator to begin the approval process.

## **Sequencing of Courses**

Courses within each sequence must be taken in the order listed on the academic plans of study listed on the School's website.

- Assignments to be completed for a course in a sequence must be turned in no later than 5 working days prior to the Census deadline in the next semester, in order that a grade can be recorded in time to allow the student to complete the subsequent course. If the work is not completed, the student will be required to drop the subsequent course before the Census deadline.
- If students are out of sequence for any reason (e.g., incompletes, withdrawal from a course, leave of absence) it is imperative that they consult with their faculty advisors to devise a revised plan of study to bring them back into sequence with as little disruption as possible.
- Due to the sequencing of our curriculum, if a student fails a practice class, the student may be required to postpone micro classes and practicum to a later date to insure they are taken concurrently, preserving the integrity of the curriculum.

### **1. Two-year Model**

The two-year program offers four semesters of course work leading to the MSW degree in two years (see Appendix). This option is intended for students who can devote their time and attention to intensive study. Practicum (two days a week in the first year, two and a half days a week in the second) is undertaken concurrently with a

full load of classroom courses. The normal sequence of courses for a two-year program of work can be found in the Appendices of this manual.

**Students who work more than 10-20 hours per week while in graduate school should consider changing to the three-year MSW program model (approval required).**

Class days and times vary by campus. On the San Bernardino campus, classes are offered either Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, between the hours of 9AM and 3:45PM. Students may choose to take elective classes at other times. On the Palm Desert Campus, classes are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 4:00PM and 9:45PM.

## **2. Three-year Model**

The three-year model allows students to complete MSW degree requirements in three years. This program is intended for students who need to spread their studies over a longer period of time to accommodate other responsibilities. It must be emphasized, however, that an MSW Program is very demanding of time and energy, even when undertaken over three years.

**Working students should plan for some flexibility in work schedules to accommodate program requirements.**

On the San Bernardino and Palm Desert Campuses, students in the three-year program model can expect to be in classes on Tuesday and Thursday evenings between 5:30PM and 9:45PM. In the Pathway Program model, students will be in asynchronous online courses with the exception of any practicum education courses, which have scheduled days and times. Elective courses are offered at a variety of times and in different modalities.

Practicum requirements are another important consideration for students enrolling in the three-year model as they arrange their other responsibilities to accommodate graduate school. **No evening and weekend practicum placements are offered entirely during weekend or evening hours.** All MSW students are required to complete practicum during regular business hours (Monday-Friday 8AM-5PM).

Students seeking employment based placements should review the policies and procedures in the CSUSB BASW and MSW Practicum Education Manual.

The information above is offered to help you plan realistically for the MSW Program. Combining work and the three-year model, the MSW Program is challenging but manageable for most students. Students are encouraged to consult with their faculty advisor about their program of work and about alternative ways of juggling their many responsibilities to allow the time necessary for graduate study.

## **3. Advanced Standing one-year model**



The Advanced Standing one-year model consists of three terms of study, beginning with summer and ending in spring. This option is intended for students who can devote their time and attention to intensive study. This option is offered on the San Bernardino and Palm Desert Campuses. On the San Bernardino campus, classes are offered either Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays, between the hours of 9AM and 3:45PM. Students may choose to take elective classes that could be as late as 6:45PM. On the Palm Desert Campus, classes are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 4:00PM and 9:45PM. Students will be in practicum two- and one-half days per week.

We recommend students refrain from working, or work only minimal part-time hours, during the Advanced Standing program.

#### **4. Advanced Standing two-year model**

The Advanced Standing two-year model consists of five terms of study, beginning with summer and ending in Spring. This option is intended for students that would like additional time in the program for work or personal reasons. This option is offered on the San Bernardino and Palm Desert Campuses. On both campuses, classes are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays between the hours of 5:30PM and 9:45PM. Students will be in practicum two- and one-half days per week on the days they are not in class in the second academic year of the program.

#### **5. Your Individual “Plan of Work” and Possible Changes**

Each student is responsible for becoming familiar with MSW degree requirements and keeping track of when to take particular courses. Check with your faculty advisor if you are considering any deviation from the usual sequencing of courses. A blank Individual Program of Study form is included in the Appendix for your use in keeping track of your progress towards the MSW degree. Remember that plans for returning to practicum must be made several months in advance.

#### **6. Leaves of Absence/Deferral of Admission**

It is possible to take a leave of absence from the MSW Program and from the university to accommodate medical problems, military duty, or personal issues. Leaves are required for any student who will be absent from the university for one semester or more. With an approved leave of absence, the student may be absent from the campus without losing rights to the specific degree requirements for the catalog year in which they were admitted.

**Students requesting a leave must complete the steps outlined in this document and the Graduate Handbook prior to the leave.** Students must also complete and submit for inclusion in their file an "Individual Plan of Work" form with the School of Social Work, outlining the proposed plan for completing the MSW program upon returning from the Leave of Absence.

Policies and procedures, forms, and details about the various categories of leaves may be found on the Office of Graduate Studies website at:

<https://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/policies-and-procedures>.

Before returning from a leave, the student should discuss with their faculty advisor how the leave has affected the planned program of work and to reaffirm or revise the Individual Program of Work in order to maintain the proper sequencing of courses.

Students who are accepted to the MSW program cannot defer that offer. If they are unable to accept the offer and want to attend at a later date, they must re-apply for admission to the MSW program.

The MSW program has a **Seven Year Completion Requirement**. Should students exceed this timeline, due to an extended leave of absence, they must attain certification of their current knowledge of material in courses taken more than seven years ago, which could entail testing of knowledge.

## **7. Returning to the MSW Program: Procedures Checklist**

When returning to the MSW Program, students should consider the following:

A) Did you complete an **Individual Program Plan of Work** with your academic advisor to show how you plan to complete the program? If not, please do so.  
B) Did you complete a **Leave of Absence Request** form? **If no Leave of Absence Request was filed**, schedule a meeting with the MSW Program Coordinator to determine what steps are necessary to reapply to the program and the University. In cases of repeated leaves of absence and other breaks in courses and practicum, a review may be required prior to re-starting the program.

C) **If both A and B are completed above, and you are within the 7-year program completion requirement**, complete a Return from Leave of Absence form available from the Office of the Registrar (<https://www.csusb.edu/registrar/records/leave-absence>) in the **semester before** you plan to return to the program.

Students must also:

D) Schedule a meeting with the Director of Practicum Education regarding placement in the practicum no later than the **semester before** you plan to return.  
E) Meet with the MSW Program Coordinator to ensure your Individual Program Plan of Work is still viable.  
F) If both D and E are completed above and you are **not within the 7-year program completion requirement**, schedule a meeting with the MSW Program Coordinator to determine if the Petition for Waiver of University Regulations is appropriate and/or whether it is necessary to reapply to the program. If approved, complete steps A and B above.

## CHAPTER 2 - COURSE AND GRADING POLICIES

### Course Schedules

Course schedules are prepared each semester by the School of Social Work. This is a very complex task which aims to make the best match between the School's resources and the needs of all students.

The range of responsibilities of our students are taken into account in this process along with the reality that, since we have multiple cohorts of students on three campuses, no schedule will ever be ideal for everyone. Although we attempt to keep to the usual schedule, it sometimes becomes necessary to make changes. Should this happen, students are informed as early as possible. Such changes will inevitably lead to unforeseen problems. However, we will do everything we can to keep you informed in a timely manner. The scheduling of required courses is predetermined by their sequencing. The times classes are scheduled may also change from year to year.

The official schedule will be provided to students each semester before registration.

### Registering for Courses

The student is required to enroll themselves into all courses and is responsible for their own schedule. The School of Social Work staff will disperse the Course Schedule prior to registration date each term.

Pathway MSW Program registration is different. Students will be registered into their correct courses by College of Extended and Global Education (CEGE) staff.

Whether on-campus or in the Pathway Program, students should check their registration to be sure it is correct. Registration is not the same as being on the Canvas course roster.

***Adding or Dropping Courses*** (After Census and through the 8<sup>th</sup> week of classes: Fall and Spring semesters only)\*

Each term has a specified census date assigned which then becomes the deadline (last day) for adding or dropping a course. Adding or dropping a course after the census date is done by petition and only for serious and compelling reasons. A Petition to Drop After Census ***can only be submitted through the 8th week of classes for each semester***. A Petition to Add After Census can be submitted through the last day of class instruction (last day of classes) for each semester. A Petition to Add After Census for the semester, the student will need to obtain signatures of approval from the instructor of the course, the chair of the department of the course and the Dean of the college for the course in question. To drop a course after census the student must obtain electronic signatures of approval from the instructor of the course, the chair of the department and the Dean of the college.

Refer to the Summer Class Schedule for procedures, dates and information to add or drop. *Courses dropped after the census deadline **will be** assigned a grade of "W".*

Instructions for the petitions are listed at the top of each form. All forms can be obtained at the Office Graduate Studies website: <https://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/forms>.

## Grading Policies

The achievement of "mastery" in each course is based on an evaluation by the instructor of a student's academic performance. Specific grading criteria and procedures are included in each course syllabus given to students at the first class session. In general, grading standards for MSW students are as follows:

Letter	Equivalent (%)	Description
A	96 to 100	Excellent
A-	90 to 95	Very Good
B+	86 to 89	Good
B	83 to 85	Satisfactory
B-	80 to 82	Poor
C+	76 to 79	Below Course Expectations
C	73 to 75	Seriously Below Course Expectations
F	Below 73	Failed Course

### Meaning of Descriptions

#### **Excellent (A)**

- Far above expected performance or criteria.
- Extensive use, understanding, and appropriate integration of required, optional and other readings and resources.
- Clear evidence of the student's own creative ideas and not just a repetition of ideas presented in class or in readings and resources. Evidence of the student's own thinking and of critical thought.
- Able to analyze and apply ideas.
- Ideas are presented clearly and in a logical and organized fashion.

#### **Very Good (A-)**

- Well above expected performance.
- Use and incorporation of relevant required course readings and materials, and some optional materials in an appropriate fashion.
- Demonstrated critical thinking, logical progression of ideas and clear linkages between various resources and the ideas presented.
- Evidence of the use of the student's own ideas.
- Shows beginning ability to analyze ideas and conceptual understanding of the issues under discussion.
- Ideas are presented clearly and are either written or presented in a logical and organized fashion.

**Good (B+)**

- Assignment is within expected performance.
- Generally used required readings and materials only.
- Demonstrated some evidence of own thinking.
- Some evidence of ability to integrate resources with ideas under discussion.
- For the most part, ideas are presented clearly and are either written or presented in a logical and organized fashion.

**Satisfactory (B)**

- A low pass.
- Minimal use of readings and course materials.
- Minimal use of imagination and creative thinking.
- Minimal evidence of ability to integrate course materials.
- Writing, clarity and organization is minimal.

**Poor (B-)**

- “Failure” at the graduate level. Student will pass the course with this grade but must get a high grade in another course to maintain a G.P.A. at 3.0.
- No use of readings.
- Lack of critical thinking.
- Lack of originality.
- Writing and organization of assignments not acceptable at graduate level.

**Below and Seriously Below Expectations (C+ and Below)**

- Does not come close to addressing the criteria listed above

**GRADE EXPECTATIONS**

1. All students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better. (e.g., a C earned in one course must be offset by an A in another course.). Students may receive a grade of C on an individual course.
2. A Practicum grade of No Credit (NC) requires a repeat of that semester of practicum. Receipt of an NC in practicum places the student on probationary status and may result in a meeting with the Student Review Committee to resolve the problem. The student must earn a grade of Credit in all subsequent practicum courses.
3. Only one repeated course can be used to replace a No Credit in Practicum or an F. (This action requires a formal petition to the School.) A student who receives more than one F (No Credit in Practicum) may be dismissed from the program.
4. A student whose GPA falls below 3.0 in any given semester will be placed on academic probation and must improve their GPA to a 3.0 in the next semester. If such improvement does not occur, the student may be dismissed from the program.
5. If you find you are having academic difficulty, please contact your advisor for help immediately.

Please refer to the [Course Catalog](#) for further information about grading standards.

**Policy on class absences**

Professional education requires that students actively participate in the learning

process. For this reason, class attendance and participation are considered important and are always taken into account in determining course grades within the MSW program. If there is no attendance policy for the course, students missing more than 30% of the class may receive a failing grade in the course. Particular attendance criteria for each course are specified in class syllabi, and these policies supersede the MSW program criteria.

Should unforeseen events interrupt a student's class attendance, professors must be notified of these events immediately, so that arrangements may be made for an incomplete or a repeat of the course; this is consistent with behavior expected of any professional. Failure to communicate with the professor may result in a failing grade for that course.

## **Incompletes & Withdrawals**

Any student needing to withdraw from a course or to request postponement of grading must do so formally and in accordance with University regulations. Any incomplete in or withdrawal from a required course must be removed prior to the student's enrollment in subsequent required courses in a given sequence.

### **Withdrawals**

Policies and procedures governing withdrawal from a course may be found in the [Course Catalog](#), under "Academic Regulations." Failure to officially withdraw from a course results in a grade of "F" being recorded on the student's transcript.

### **Incompletes**

An "Incomplete" is not given automatically when a student has not turned in all assignments for a given course. Rather, the student must initiate a request to the instructor, indicating reasons why the work could not be completed and a plan for completing the missing work. The instructor will grant or deny this request and approve a final plan for completing the work. Usually, an incomplete is only given for serious medical or personal reasons.

A student who receives an "Incomplete" (I) in a course that is a prerequisite to another course, cannot complete the subsequent course until a letter grade is recorded. (See also Sequencing of Courses above.) Any student receiving an I in a course that is a prerequisite for another course, must complete the work necessary to remove the incomplete and have a letter grade recorded by the end of the third week into the next course in the sequence. Failing that, the student will be dropped from the next course, and will not be able to proceed in the sequence of courses until necessary remedial work is done.

It is also the student's responsibility to make sure the instructor files a change of grade when the work is complete. Failure to change the incomplete to a letter grade by the date specified (or one year later if not specified) results in an F being recorded on the student's transcript.

## Grievances and Grade Appeals

If a student has questions or concerns about the grade given on an assignment or for a course, he or she should always discuss the matter first with the course instructor. The student's advisor may also be included in these discussions. If the matter cannot be resolved through discussion, the student has the right to appeal a final course grade. Such actions must be initiated within 40 calendar days after the grade is recorded. Policies governing grade appeals are available on the Advising & Academic Services webpage: <https://www.csusb.edu/advising/students/academic-grievance>.

## Advancement to Candidacy

The Advancement to Candidacy paperwork process begins the Fall the year before intended graduation. This process is completed electronically via the PAWS document.

Advancement to Candidacy constitutes formal approval of the student's individual program of work and demonstrated ability to perform professionally. By advancing to candidacy students have demonstrated to the faculty, supervisors, and themselves that they have effectively handled the rigors of graduate education in a responsible and professional manner.

To be Advanced to Candidacy by the University, MSW students must have:

1. completed all generalist year requirements,
2. achieved an overall GPA of at least 3.0,
3. conducted themselves in a professional manner both within the classroom and practicum agency site,
4. and not violated the provisions of the NASW Code of Ethics.

PLEASE NOTE: Once the **Advancement to Candidacy** has been filed with the Office of the Registrar, any deviations from the exact courses listed there as your program work (e.g., deciding to take a different elective) requires that another form (Change of Program Plan) be filed approving the change. **Often, the student is the only one who knows that such a change has taken place.** If you do not tell the School you have made a change in the courses you will actually take, the discrepancy will not be found until the final processing of your diploma. At that point (after graduation), you will receive a rather frightening letter from the Office of the Registrar informing you that you have not met the requirements for graduation.

## Grad Check

Candidates for degrees must request a Graduation Requirement Check (AKA "grad check") at the Office of the Registrar prior to the end of the term in which all degree requirements will be completed. The grad check frequently uncovers any inconsistencies that must be corrected before the degree can be conferred. Several experienced graduates have suggested that students request a grad check several semesters before graduation in order to avoid any such "surprises." While the grad check may be filed early to avoid late fees, Advancement to Candidacy is **required**

**before** the grad check can be completed.

**The last day to file a grad check for May graduation without incurring a late fee is usually in March of the year of graduation. Plan to file well before the deadline. Please review this page for updates dates:**

<https://www.csusb.edu/registrar/evaluations/graduation-requirement-check>.

## **School Honors**

School Honors refers to a small group of graduating students that are honored each year by faculty nomination and vote. School Honors is generally based on:

- A high GPA
- Outstanding performance in practicum
- An excellent research project/ project proposal, which is completed or nearly completed and will receive an “A” grade
- A demonstrated commitment to service to students and/or the community
- Typically less than 10% of students will be selected for School Honors.



## **CHAPTER 3 – STUDENT ADVISING**

Information and advising are provided during the pre-admission and admission processes. Formal advising begins when each student is assigned a faculty advisor at the beginning of the first semester of the academic year. A student may seek the advice of any faculty member whether or not that person is the formally assigned advisor.

Faculty will be provided a list with all their advisees at the beginning of each academic year. If specific concerns arise during advising, they should be documented in the student's file.

The focus of advising is on academic success. Advisors become concerned with students' personal issues only when they have a negative impact on academic performance, or when the student requests advice. Students are encouraged to attempt to resolve course-related academic conflicts directly with the appropriate instructor; the advisor potentially becomes involved with issues that go beyond a particular course.

### **Advisor and Advisee Role and Responsibilities**

- To have contact at least once per semester. This may be brief if the student is proceeding with no problems or specific needs/issues that need discussing. Advisors will document this meeting.
- To meet about any academic or professional behavior concerns.
- Advisor will communicate significant events concerning advisees as needed, including students at academic risk, requests for leave of absence, and "individual plan of work" to accommodate student needs. Advisors should document all information.
- Advisor will consult with or refer a student to colleagues whenever an issue regarding a student is not being resolved.
- Advisor will provide academic guidance on the plan of study, particularly in the area of electives. If a student wishes to take an elective outside of the School of Social Work, the advisor will need to approve and document this request before the class is taken. Any approvals should be forwarded to the MSW Program Coordinator to ensure they are documented in the student PAWS.

Proactive communication between advisor and student is recommended. If issues arise, it is best to have previously met. Topics for checking in may be how course work is going, where the student is placed, and how practicum is going. Students are encouraged to bring up any concerns or questions they may have as early as possible.

Other topics may include:

- Information about university resources, and courses in the School of Social Work, as well as, in the university;
- Support for the student's career goals and aspirations related to social work;
- Issues related to the retention of the student once he or she is accepted in the social work program;

- Adjustment to the academic rigors of the School of Social Work specifically, and to the university in general; and
- Assistance in dealing with academic and academically related problems, in accordance with School, College, and University Policies and Procedures.

## **CHAPTER 4 - POLICIES FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

### **1.0 Standards for Social Work Education**

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

Since becoming a professional is a gradual process, not all criteria are expected to be met at all times. Persons who teach and supervise students, along with program administrators, will assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to making decisions in a helping process. These expectations include the classroom, practicum, and off-campus university related activities.

Students are also expected to perform academically and professionally as aligned with CSUSB, state, and federal policies. When students are potentially in violation with policies outside of the School of Social Work, the violation will be reported as required by policy or law. However, the School of Social Work may complete a review process based on our policies as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook and the BASW and MSW Practicum Handbook.

### **2.0 Criteria for Evaluating Academic Performance**

In order to meet its responsibilities to provide quality professional education and to ensure that its graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the School of Social Work evaluates the academic performance of its students in four general areas: Basic Abilities to Acquire Professional Skills; Mental and Emotional Abilities; Professional Performance Skills, and Scholastic Performance. Meeting the criteria for scholastic achievement is necessary but not sufficient to ensure continued enrollment in a program. Both professional behavior and scholastic performance comprise academic standards.

### **2.1 Basic Abilities Necessary to Acquire Professional Skills**

#### **2.1.1 Communication Skills**

Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings.

a) *Written*: Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and complete

adequately all written assignments as specified by faculty.

b) *Oral*: Communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all oral assignments and to meet the objectives of practicum as specified by faculty.

### **2.1.2 Interpersonal Skills**

Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. Takes appropriate responsibility for own actions and considers the impact of these actions on others.

### **2.1.3 Cognitive Skills**

Exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and apply it to appropriate situations in classroom and practicum. Demonstrates grounding in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research - including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice. Exhibits ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge to professional practice.

### **2.1.4 Physical Skills**

Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and practicum placement with or without accommodations. See section on *Accommodations for Disabilities* for clarification.

## **2.2 Emotional and Mental Abilities Necessary for Performance in the Program and Professional Practice**

### **2.2.1 Stress Management**

Demonstrates ability to recognize and deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.

### **2.2.2 Emotional and Mental Capacities**

Uses sound judgment. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Engages in counseling or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:

- Compromise scholastic and other performance
- Interfere with professional judgment and behavior
- Jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics

## **2.3 Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice**

### **2.3.1 Professional Commitment**

Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Demonstrates commitment to the essential values of social work that includes the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her rights to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

### **2.3.2 Professional Behavior**

Exhibits behaviors in the classroom and in the community that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional and ethical standards and societal laws. Appearance, dress, and general demeanor reflect a professional manner. Shows potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.

Works effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Advocates for himself/herself in an appropriate and responsible manner and uses proper channels for conflict resolution. Shows a willingness to receive and accept feedback and supervision in a positive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development.

### **2.3.3 Self-Awareness**

Exhibits knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.

### **2.3.4 Ethical Obligations**

Current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in the NASW Code of Ethics. Ethical behaviors include:

- Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values. Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.
- Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients.

- Demonstration of respect for the rights of others. Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination.
- Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and placement.
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

## **2.4 Scholastic Performance**

MSW students must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) or better to graduate from the program. Students are placed on academic probation if their *overall GPA* drops below 3.0 in any given semester and must bring their overall GPA up to a 3.0 in the next semester. For those students whose overall GPA drops below 3.0, the Chair of the Student Review Committee will inform the student, advisor, and Program Director in writing of their probationary status. Students are advised to meet with their advisor, or another identified mentor, for help improving academic work. If the student does not achieve an overall 3.0 GPA in the subsequent semester, he/she faces termination from the program.

A Practicum grade of "No Credit" requires a repeat of that semester of practicum. Receipt of a "NC" in practicum places the student on probationary status and may result in a meeting with the Student Review Committee to resolve the problem. The student needs to pass (practicum and seminar) in all subsequent practicum education courses. If students receive more than one "F" (or "No Credit" in Practicum), they may be dismissed from the program.

A student can repeat one class (practicum or other course) in a graduate program. Note: Students with more than one "F" on their transcripts cannot graduate from the MSW Program.

### **2.4.1 Indicators of Academic Performance Criteria**

Indicators of academic performance in the School of Social Work may include but are not limited to the following:

- Feedback or reference letters from faculty, work supervisors, or supervisors of volunteer human service activity or other practicum experiences.
- Feedback from agency-based liaison or practicum education faculty.
- Observation of classroom, volunteer, or practicum behaviors.
- Performance in oral and written assignments, examinations, social work skills labs, or other appropriate coursework.
- Student personal statements or self-assessments.
- Interviews with faculty or other professionals.
- Taped interview situations (audio or video).
- Feedback from students, staff, university, helping professionals, or community.

- Feedback from faculty in other social work programs that students have attended.
- Signed confidentiality statements, scholastic honesty statements, contract to adhere to NASW Code of Ethics, other contracts between the School and the student.

## **2.5 Accommodations for Disabilities**

No otherwise qualified student shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the School of Social Work. A student with a disability may be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be eligible for reasonable accommodation to provide equal opportunity to meet academic criteria for professional behavior and scholastic performance.

Any otherwise qualified student with a protected disability who requests a reasonable accommodation must notify the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities and provide documentation as needed. The Office of Services to Students with Disabilities makes recommendations for accommodations. The School of Social Work will review academic performance criteria in light of individual student circumstances to explore issues of appropriateness and accommodation. An initial assessment, subsequent plan, use of outside experts (including the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities), and periodic checks between the School of Social Work and the student are appropriate courses of action in making accommodations.

## **3.0 Policies and Procedures for Review of Academic Performance**

Two levels of review can occur at the School of Social Work in reviewing a student's academic performance. The level of review depends upon the potential severity of the concern. Information disclosed during student meetings with faculty, program coordinators, or school administrators will be shared with other appropriate personnel if the information raises concerns about professional performance. Faculty and program administrators will share pertinent information with each other for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns. **They will follow university procedures related to student performance issues.**

### **3.1 Performance that May Result in a Student Review**

Student reviews can occur under any of the following circumstances:

- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements as stated under Scholastic Performance. Students earning a grade of "F" or "NC" in any MSW course are automatically referred to the SRC and must repeat the course. Students may not move forward in the program until they have successfully repeated the failed course, and are only allowed one opportunity to repeat a course. Students who fail two courses are automatically dismissed from the program. Students who earn a grade of C+ or C in a course may be referred to the SRC and may be required to repeat the course.
- Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student. (Faculty must adhere to university guidelines. For complete University policy and procedures, see *California State University, San Bernardino* [Course Catalog](#), Academic Regulations, Plagiarism and Cheating.)
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics.
- Behavior judged to be in violation of the Student Discipline Code (See CSUSB

[Course Catalog](#)).

- Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else.
- Commission of a criminal act that is contrary to professional practice.
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior.
- Failure to meet any of the Standards for Social Work Education: School of Social Work Criteria for Evaluation of Academic Performance. For some of these circumstances, faculty are required to contact other entities, such as the Police Department or the CSUSB Student Conduct Office.

## **3.2 The Two Levels of Review (see flow charts below)**

### **3.2.1 Level 1 Review**

Whenever a faculty member, faculty liaison or practicum education instructor has concerns regarding a student's academic performance or professional/ethical conduct in the classroom or practicum they shall meet with the student to resolve the concerns. If the issues are not resolved, the student's academic advisor should be contacted to help address the concern and do further fact finding. A note of these meetings and activities should be placed on the log at the front of the student's file. If the issues are still not resolved, the faculty member or advisor will make a referral to the Chair of the Student Review Committee for a Level 2 Review. If the concern is of a very serious nature, it may be necessary to go directly to a Level 2 Review.

### **3.2.2 Level 2 Review**

A Level 2 Review involves the Student Review Committee (SRC, which is composed of the Chair of the Student Review committee, and at least two other Faculty members not parties to the problem). The person making the referral and the student's advisor, as well as other faculty whose expertise is required (e.g., practicum education department and program staff) will attend.

Within five business days of receiving the referral, the SRC Chair will:

- Notify the student of the referral using the student's CSUSB email address
- Provide the student with the referral form and supporting documentation
- Inquire about the student's preferences for meeting dates and times

The SRC Chair will schedule the SRC to take place no sooner than two business days after the student has received the referral documentation, and no later than 10 days after the referral was made. The SRC will take into consideration the student's meeting preferences; however, it is the student's responsibility to respond to the notice for a SRC meeting, and to attend the meeting (in person, via phone, or via videoconferencing), even if the meeting cannot be scheduled during the student's preferred dates/ times. Should the student fail to respond and/ or attend, the SRC will meet and will render a decision without the student's input. Should the student withdraw from the MSW program or from the University while under referral to the SRC, the SRC process will continue with or without the student's participation.

If an issue is not resolved at Level 1, the Chair of the Student Review committee will convene the SRC to meet with the student and involved faculty members. The meeting



will include communication regarding the specific concerns related to academic performance and/or professional/ethical conduct in the classroom or practicum and an opportunity for the student to present their perspective on the concerns. After the level 2 hearing has occurred, the Chair of the Student Review committee may discuss the recommendations with the College of Social and Behavioral Science Office or Office of Graduate Studies. The SRC Chair will inform the student of the decision which can include one or more of the following actions:

**1) *Permit the student to remain in the program with no conditions.*** In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the student or program is required.

**2) *Establish formal conditions for the student's continuance in the program.*** A remediation plan will be developed in consultation with the student, the advisor, and the concerned faculty member as needed. This plan shall:

- specify the concerns of the faculty member in detail
- indicate the actions to be undertaken by the student
- indicate the date by which the student must demonstrate the required level of knowledge, skill, behavior, or ethical conduct
- the plan *may* indicate the name of a mentor (possibly the academic advisor) who will meet regularly with the student and report progress to the SRC
- be reported on regularly by the mentor

The student will be given a copy of the plan and asked to acknowledge receipt of the document. The student will also be informed, in writing, of the right to rebut the Plan or grieve the decision. All students who have been placed on a remedial plan are also automatically placed on academic probation. The plan and reports will be filed in the student's file and reported to the Office of Graduate Studies.

The SRC chair shall, on or before the date specified in the plan for completion of the remediation, review student progress. One or two actions must be taken to resolve the concern:

- The plan is met and the concern is alleviated. This is communicated in writing to all those in the above paragraph, plus the Director of the School of Social Work and members of the SRC.
- The concern is not alleviated. The SRC shall make a recommendation, which may be that the student be dismissed from the program.

**3) *Dismiss the student from the program.*** In some situations, the SRC will recommend that the student no longer continue in the social work program. This decision will be voted upon by the full faculty and if confirmed by the full faculty, is final at the School level. The decision will be communicated to the student in writing including information on the right to appeal through the university's academic grievance process (see CSUSB [Course Catalog](#)).

At the time a student is dismissed from the program, they are dropped from classes and are no longer enrolled. This will be communicated to Graduate Studies and University

Records. This may require repayment of financial aid funds. If a student is dismissed from the MSW program, they are dismissed from the university as well.

### **3.3 Role of the Advisor**

The advising process is critical to helping both students who enter academic probation as well as those who develop academic or professional difficulties. The advisor may set up monthly meetings with the student to discuss the situation, progress, and growth. The important factor is that the student feels he/she can work through the issues with the advisor.

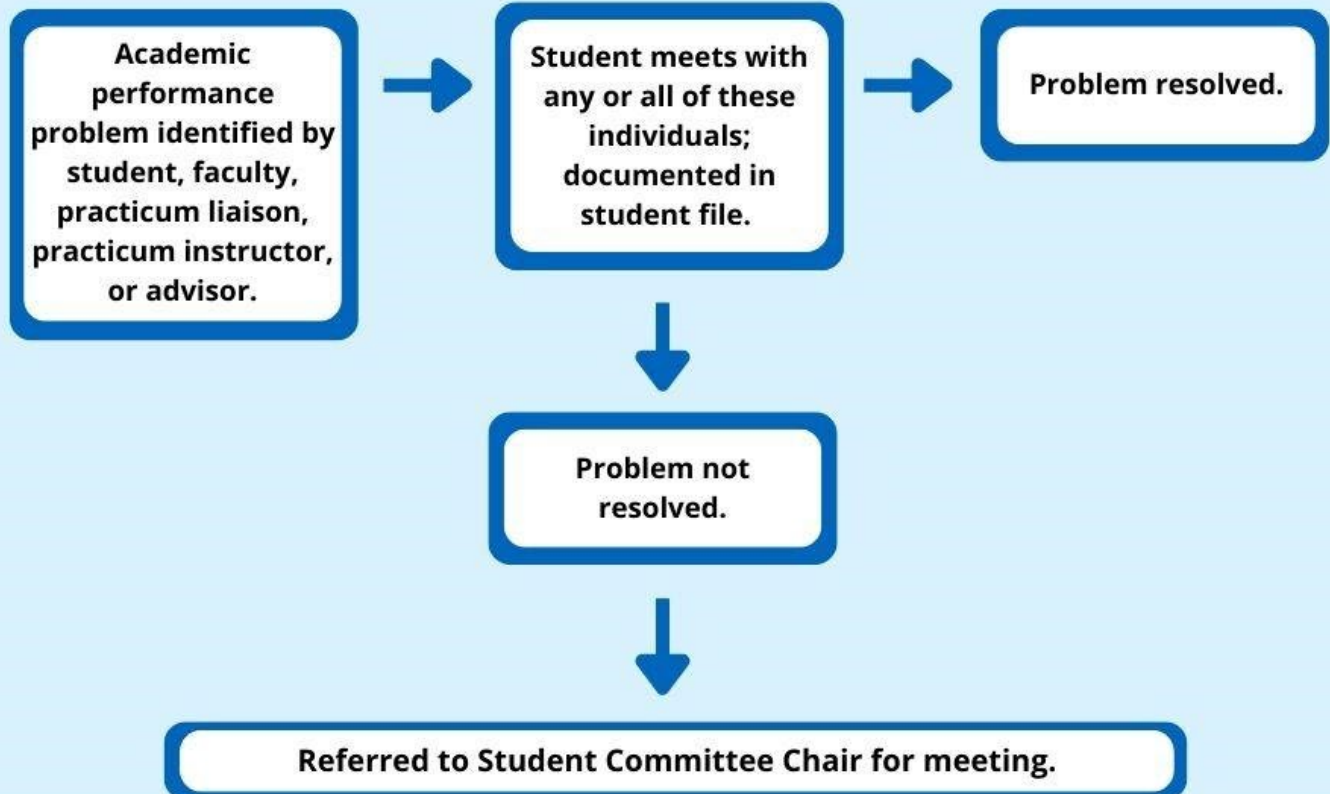
Any student who is dismissed from the MSW Program and then re-applies to the program will be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the Admissions Committee during the routine admissions process/timelines. In such cases, faculty representatives of the Admissions Committee may interview the student. If a student applies to the MSW Program who has been dismissed from another MSW Program, the Admissions Committee may ask that student for permission to contact the previous MSW Program regarding that dismissal.

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1. Much of the content of this chapter is modified from "Standards for Social Work Education" (2001) University of Texas at Austin, School of Social Work, with the permission of Dr. Charlene Urwin.

## Student Review Process Flow Chart Level One

**START**



## Student Review Process Flow Chart Level Two

### START

SRC Chair gathers information in writing from all parties. The student shall be informed of the specific concerns. Student asked to submit written input if they desire.

Meeting is held with student and SRC.

Issue is resolved. No action plan.

Action Plan made for remediation; (optional) advisor or mentor and Chair of SRC, or others, as appropriate, and goes into student's file.

SRC recommendation to faculty to dismiss students.

Faculty vote to retain and develop alternative plan of action.

Success of plan reviewed.

Faculty vote on dismissal.

## **CHAPTER 5- STUDENT RESOURCES, CLUBS, AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

### **Student Resources**

MSW students have access to two resource rooms (SB-367 in San Bernardino and RG-211 in Palm Desert). These rooms are intended to give students space to congregate, store club materials, and participate in meetings when the rooms are not in use by classes, faculty, or staff. Having such a facility gives students the opportunity to form friendships and collegial relationships that will last beyond your graduation from this program. Please take care of these spaces! It is all students' responsibility to keep this room clean and tidy. Please pick up after yourself and clear away any food and/or drink that you may have taken into that room. If these rooms are occupied, students may also use other accessible spaces including the Student Success Center (SB 302B), the Graduate Student Success Center in San Bernardino, as well as various lounges in the Rogers Gateway Building in Palm Desert. See <https://www.csusb.edu/smsu/resources/graduate-student-success-center> for more information.

### **Social Work Student Association (SWSA)**

All MSW students are invited to be members of the Social Work Student Association (SWSA) and are encouraged to become actively involved. SWSA is an active organization that serves to represent student interests and opinions in School policy making processes, to facilitate communication between students and faculty, to sponsor events that facilitate networking and cohesion among students, and to foster linkages with other student organizations on campus. Meetings are scheduled to accommodate both full and part time students, to encourage input from all students.

Each year, representatives are elected from each class to further communication between all students and the association.

### **National Association of Social Workers (NASW)**

Students are encouraged to join and become active in our profession's primary association, the NASW. Membership applications are available on the NASW California's website: <https://www.naswca.org/>. Not only do students enjoy substantially reduced dues, but they also become eligible for reduced transition dues upon graduation.

The local Inland Empire unit of NASW meets regularly to hear informative speakers, discuss current professional issues, and enjoy the company of colleagues. Students are very much welcomed at these meetings which provide an excellent means of increasing your own professional network.

## CHAPTER 6 - GRADUATION AND BEYOND

Several separate tasks are required of students in the final year of the MSW Program to assure that a degree is actually received in the end. Further information on the policies summarized below can be found in the [CSUSB Course Catalog](#).

### Major Tasks to Complete Before Graduation

- Advancement to Candidacy (See Chapter 2 for details)
- Graduation Requirement Check (See Chapter 2 for details)
- Commencement

There are three events you should be aware of during spring semester:

- College of Social & Behavioral Sciences Honors Night - students selected for MSW Honors, Outstanding Graduate Student, or other awards are invited by the College Dean's Office to this event with their guests. Please refer to Chapter 2 of this handbook for more information about the honors selection process. Registration is required for this event.
- MSW Hooding Ceremony - all graduating MSW students and limited guests are invited to this event celebrating MSW graduates, who may be hooded by their favorite faculty member. Tickets are issued by the School of Social Work and are required for this event.
- Commencement - all graduating MSW students and limited guests are invited to attend the College of Social & Behavioral Sciences commencement ceremony. In addition to the social work faculty, the Dean of the College and President and Provost of the university attend this event to congratulate you. To learn more about commencement, please go to this site: <https://www.csusb.edu/commencement>. Tickets issued by the Commencement Office are required for this event. Don't miss it!

### Graduation Date and the Research Project

In general, graduation date is determined by the last semester in which course work is taken. However, students should be aware of a deadline connected to filing the Research Project/ Research Project Proposal. In addition to approval by the supervising faculty member, the format of the final Research Project must be approved by Graduate Studies. Grades cannot be turned in for the final research methods course (either SW 6016 or SW 6114) until the supervising faculty member sees the final approval from Graduate Studies. For all these steps to proceed on time, **complete drafts of manuscripts must reach the Office of Graduate Studies by the scheduled dates identified by the Office of Graduate Studies, each year. If these deadlines are not met, the diploma date will be for the subsequent semester. See the Graduate Studies website for forms and deadlines** <http://gradstudies.csusb.edu/>.

Students who do not have final approval from Graduate Studies by the final review submission deadline must enroll in **continuous enrollment** in order to submit their project again, after the deadline, typically during the summer session. Students may obtain information and the needed forms either at the College of Extended and Global Education (CEGE) or the Office of Graduate Studies for a low cost method of obtaining continuous enrollment.

## Licensure

The LCSW (License in Clinical Social Work) is a California post-MSW license required for most advanced social work positions in the state. (Equivalent licenses exist in virtually all states, but their exact names and initials may differ.) Application packets, which describe the requirements for earning an LCSW, are available from the Board of Behavioral Sciences <http://www.bbs.ca.gov>. There is a notice board in the northern corridor of the School dedicated to current information from the Board of Behavioral Sciences. It is a good idea to become familiar with licensing requirements well in advance.

In brief, the LCSW requires an accredited MSW, subsequent registration as an "Associate" working towards licensure, the equivalent of two years of full-time employment while registered (under appropriate supervision), and proof of training in child abuse assessment and reporting, alcoholism and other chemical substance dependency, sexuality, aging and long term care, and domestic violence. (The required MSW curriculum meets all California BBS MSW pre-licensure requirements as of 6/24) these initial requirements are met, the candidate must pass a written examination.

## **CHAPTER 7 - PEOPLE, PLACES AND POLICIES**

### **PLEASE CONSULT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK'S WEBSITE FOR FACULTY AND STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

#### **Documents**

- School of Social Work's web site <https://www.csusb.edu/social-work/faculty-staff>
- CSUSB Course Catalog: Available online at <http://bulletin.csusb.edu>.
- CSUSB Office of Graduate Studies: <https://www.csusb.edu/graduate-studies/policies-and-procedures>
- CSUSB Office of the Registrar: <https://www.csusb.edu/registrar/all-forms>
- Class Schedule: <https://www.csusb.edu/class-schedule> and we will provide an updated schedule for your particular program every term.
- NASW Code of Ethics: Please use the NASW Website to access this very important document at <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>.

#### **General Policies**

##### **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The University and School are committed to an environment free of harassment. If students feel unable to approach the Director of the School with any concerns they might have about sexual harassment issues, then they are strongly encouraged to contact the CSUSB Title IX and Gender Equity Office at (909) 537-5669.

##### **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The Policies and Procedures of California State University, San Bernardino on discrimination are enumerated in University's Diversity Policy. The School believes strongly in the importance of an educational experience that prepares students to work effectively with diverse populations as defined by color, ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and physical and mental abilities. Through assignments, lectures, class discussion, examples, exercises and choice of practicum settings, students are assured an opportunity to understand and work effectively with clients who represent a wide range of attitudes and points of view. Further, the School is committed to learning experiences that provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to values and ethics reflected by the profession and society at large. The Department of Human Resources is designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies. If any member of the University community, including students, feel they have been discriminated against, they can contact Human Resources at (909) 537-5138, and their call will be routed accordingly. If you have any questions that are unanswered, you may contact the CSUSB Human Resources at



(909) 537-5138, or e-mail [hr@csusb.edu](mailto:hr@csusb.edu) or visit us on campus in Sierra Hall, room 110.

## **Background Checks & Criminal History**

The University does not conduct criminal background checks on students. However, almost every practicum agency requires a criminal background check. Federal and state laws mandate criminal background checks for persons placed in many settings. Any criminal record (infraction, charge, misdemeanor or felony) may make a student ineligible for placement in certain agencies. Students must disclose to the Director of Practicum Education or designated Practicum Education Coordinator any criminal background, including any and all expunged and/or dismissed charges, as they will still appear on background checks.

Students may be ineligible for placement, or terminated from an agency, if criminal background information comes to light without prior disclosure. The Director of Practicum Education or Program/Practicum Education Coordinator can provide insight to students as to potential opportunities and barriers to securing a practicum site but cannot guarantee placement or choice of placement. Information disclosed will be used only for the purpose of determining appropriate practicum options. Please note: If a student cannot be placed, they will not be able to continue in the MSW Program.

In the event a student is arrested or charged with a new offense or is convicted during the program, the student is required to disclose this information to the Director of the School of Social Work, Director of Practicum Education, designated Practicum Education Coordinator, and Academic Advisor within 48 hours of arrest, charge, or conviction. Students may be terminated from the program if an arrest or charge comes to light without immediate disclosure.

Failure to provide the required disclosures or notices will be deemed as a deception and will be handled as a form of academic dishonesty in addition to any other violations. Arrests, violations and/or convictions, which violate University and/or School policies or standards, could result in sanctions. Please see the NASW code of ethics, "4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud and Deception."

Students who are arrested, charged or convicted during the program are not permitted to return to practicum until further notice. The student will be referred to the Student Review Committee for an initial review of the situation. The student assumes the risk involved with disclosing information and thus may choose not to. However, if the student chooses not to disclose information, the Student Review Committee will not be able to determine a course of action.

If a student is charged with a new offense, the student will most likely be required to take a leave of absence until the case has been resolved and a decision has been made by a court of law. A student may be permitted to complete classroom course work for the current semester. Once the outcome of the specific case or circumstance has been determined, it is the student's responsibility to inform the Director of the School of Social Work, Director of Practicum Education, designated Practicum Education Coordinator, and Academic Advisor. At that time, the student will be referred to the Student Review Committee again for consideration of specific factors and implications related to the social work profession and his/her ability to return to the program and practicum work.

## **File Sharing Policy**

The unauthorized recording of peer-to-peer file copyrighted works, including music, pictures, and movies is a violation of the campus Computer Use Policy. The practice is also illegal and may carry significant monetary and/or criminal sanctions. It is the responsibility of students who are downloading or uploading documents to make certain that they are not copyrighted works, or that the student has the permission of the copyright holder.

## **Restrictions on Assistance**

The School of Social Work strives to be helpful to students in the ways we reasonably can. However, because of budgetary and other resource constraints, the following services cannot be provided for students.

- No materials of any kind can be duplicated. Students may not use the School's copier. Graduate Studies and Associated Students each have funds for such costs.
- Grades and scores cannot be given out over the telephone by support staff. Papers, exams, etc., are returned directly by course instructors.
- School telephones cannot be used to make off-campus calls.
- Items in student files (e.g., transcripts, grade sheets, references) cannot be copied or mailed.

## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A. Advanced Generalist Year, Areas of Specialization

APPENDIX B Individual Plan of Work: Planning Form

APPENDIX C. Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication

## APPENDIX A: Specialization Information

### Explanation

#### Areas of Specialization within the MSW Program at CSUSB

The MSW Program at CSUSB uses an advanced generalist model in its curriculum. Your *generalist* courses (first year for full time students and first two years for part time students) are in human behavior in the social environment (HBSE), research, micro practice, and macro practice. In your generalist courses you learn about the *generalist* model of social work practice. This prepares you to work effectively with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

**During the last semester of your generalist year you are required to choose a special issue, client population, or area of practice within social work that will become your *specialization during your advanced generalist year*.** Choosing an area of specialization allows you to have an intensive learning experience in an area of interest to you. Broad areas of specialization include, but are not limited to, such topics as child welfare, mental health, substance abuse, school social work, gerontology, medical social work, etc. Within these general categories we recommend a specialization that is more focused or specific. Some examples might be substance abuse amongst older adults, or working with a particular mental health diagnosis, or working with medically fragile youth in the child welfare system.

During your *advanced generalist* micro and macro courses (second year for two year students and third year for three year students) you add what you learned in your generalist courses about the generalist model, social work related theories, and practice models to what you are learning in the advanced generalist year and apply that knowledge to the area of specialization you chose. In each of your advanced generalist year courses in micro and macro practice you will write papers and/or present reports, applying the material you are learning in class to various aspects of your area of specialization. In this way, you will be able to explore your specialization and important issues within it from a variety of perspectives.

All students in the program take advanced generalist courses that cover the same broad content areas, but each individual student's learning in those courses is unique because he or she is applying the course material to an area of special interest. During the advanced generalist courses you will have the opportunity in class to hear from students who have other areas of specialization so you will be exposed repeatedly to social work practice areas outside of your specialization. As you reach the end of your advanced generalist courses you will know one area of social work practice very well while also having an appreciation for the breadth of practice within the practicum.

If you are in the Title IV-E program, your specialization during your advanced generalist year should be "child welfare", although you will pick a specific area within child welfare to specialize in.

To the extent possible, your second year placement should be related to your area of specialization. You will need to talk to the Director of Practicum Education or the Title IV-E Coordinator about this. Your research project should also focus on a particular issue within your specialization. Your research topic will, by design, be very narrow. It is important to understand that your "specialization" and your "research topic" are related,

but not the same thing. If your specialization was “mental health” and you narrowed that broad area to “people with post-traumatic stress disorder” for the purposes of writing your micro papers in your advanced generalist year, you might further narrow that topic to “efficacy of outpatient treatment groups for Vietnam era veterans with PTSD” as a research question. Thus, the research question is derived from your area of specialization but it is not the same thing.

As your advanced generalist year progresses and you are completing both micro and macro assignments in your area of specialization, completing an internship with related practice experiences and conducting research in a related area, you should become quite knowledgeable about and very conversant with your particular specialization.

After you graduate you may or may not seek or find employment in the exact area that was your area of specialization in the MSW Program at CSUSB. However, it is the intent of your faculty that during your generalist and advanced generalist years you will have experienced a learning process that will allow you to build on the generalist model and use what you learned in the advanced generalist year *about* developing an area of specialization to develop another area of specialization in whatever area you choose. Many social workers develop several areas of expertise and specialize in different areas of practice during their professional careers.

## APPENDIX B: Individual Plan of Work

### California State University, San Bernardino School of Social Work

#### Individual Plan of Work

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Classification in the Master of Social Work Program \_\_\_\_\_

Student Classification: \_\_\_\_\_ 2 Year Program \_\_\_\_\_ 3 Year Program \_\_\_\_\_ AS Program

#### Coursework to date

#### Anticipated coursework schedule

Fall \_\_\_\_\_

Fall \_\_\_\_\_

Fall \_\_\_\_\_

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Reason for request: \_\_\_\_\_

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Student's Signature

Date

Advisor's  
Signature

Date

Director of Practicum  
Education

Date

MSW Coordinator

Date

## **APPENDIX C: Policy on Social Media and Professional Communication**

Public social networks are not private. Even when open only to approved or invited members, users cannot be certain that privacy will exist among the general membership of sites. If social work students choose to participate in such forums, please assume that anything posted can be seen, read, and critiqued. What is said, posted, linked to, commented on, uploaded, subscribed to, etc., can be accessed and archived, posing potential harm to professional reputations and prospective careers.

Social work students who use social media (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, etc.) and other forms of electronic communication (i.e. blogs, etc.) must be mindful of how their communication may be perceived by clients, colleagues, faculty, and others. Social work students are expected to make every effort to minimize material which could be considered inappropriate for a professional social worker in training. Because of this, social work students are advised to manage security settings at their most private levels and avoid posting information/photos or using any language that could jeopardize their professional image.

Students are asked to consider the amount of personal information posted on these sites and are obliged to block any client access to involvement in the students' social networks. Client material should not be referred to in any form of electronic media, including any information that might lead to the identification of a client or compromise client confidentiality in any way. Additionally, students must critically evaluate any material that is posted regarding community agencies and professional relationships, as certain material could violate the standards set by the School of Social Work and/or the NASW Code of Ethics.

Social work students should consider that they will be representing professional social work practice as well as the CSUSB School of Social Work Program while in the classroom, the university community, and the broader area communities.