



WINONA STATE UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK (includes Field Manual)

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(All content subject to change.)

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WELCOME!

Dear MSW Student,

Thank you for selecting the WSU MSW Program as a means to pursue your personal and professional goals! We are honored to join with you on your journey. We are committed to supporting you through an excellent and unique learning experience and to co-creating with you an inclusive, respectful, honoring, engaging, and safe community.

Not only will you be provided with numerous wonderful opportunities to learn and grow, you also will play a truly unique and exciting role in the program's development and history. The faculty view students as collaborators in all MSW program endeavors. Just like you, the program is dedicated to ongoing growth and improvement. Earlier student cohorts have courageously helped us smooth out some bumps in our online program, and their learning and professional development have confirmed that we are offering students an excellent, cutting-edge MSW education. We ask that you provide us with constructive feedback to help us continue to build and refine our program.

You will be assigned a faculty guide who will be with you throughout your progression through the program. Your Faculty Guide looks forward to forging a special and productive relationship with you. Please make a point of investing in that relationship with your Guide.

As Program Director, I have the privilege of being available to help you with any questions and/or concerns you may have. Please do not be a stranger, and please feel to reach out for support whenever you may need it.

Again, thank you for investing in the WSU MSW Program and allowing us to invest in you and the pursuit of your goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. Carey', written in a cursive style.

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Program Mission Statement and Goals

PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) states that “The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty (NASW). The Winona State University Master of Social Work Program emerged from a joint desire of the WSU Social Work Faculty and regional social work leaders and practitioners to develop an MSW program that applied the profession’s mission to address the particular needs and strengths of our region. The collaborative concluded that our region has a profound shortage of clinical social workers to provide for the mental health, healthcare, and child welfare social work services need by our rapidly growing and diversifying population. Also acknowledged was that, despite the shortage of practitioners, our region has a wealth of expertise in these areas reflected by centers of excellence such as Olmsted County Community and Social Services and the Mayo Clinic. The collaborates also acknowledged the central role of trauma in the issues confronted by clients across areas of social work practice.

The resulting WSU MSW Program states its mission as follows:

The Winona State University Master of Social Work Program (located within a regional public university that is committed to community engagement and service) has a diverse, distinctive, and caring faculty who collaborate with eminent community partners to prepare trauma-informed clinical social workers with a distinctive synthesis of knowledge, skills, practice wisdom, and immersive experiences to:

- **promote client empowerment and social justice through applying an honoring, strengths-based orientation to increasingly diverse, disparate, and ever-evolving individuals and communities;**
- **integrate with, expand, and enhance existing communities of practice;**
and
- **develop, utilize, and assess innovative and research-informed practices.**

The program mission statement’s first bullet that reads, in part, “promote client empowerment and social justice through applying an honoring, strengths-based orientation,” reflects the program’s orientation to the profession’s mission to “enhanc[ing] human well-being.” The program mission statement’s references to collaboration, a distinct synthesis, integration, expansion, and enhancement indicate the primary means used to prepare our students to address client system’s basic and complex needs. That is, the program collaborates with community strengths to help develop practitioners well-versed in tools and skills needed to address basic and complex needs. The program mission statement’s focus on trauma-informed clinical social work emerged from the consensus that the region’s shortage of clinical social work services and exposures to trauma were especially profound among ethnic/racial minorities,

immigrants and refugees, women, children, the LGBTQ+ community, rural populations, and those facing various forms of economic hardships.

PROGRAM GOALS

Reflecting the program's mission and the core values of the social work profession, the program's goal are stated as follows.

The WSU MSW Program strives to:

- 1. Produce trauma-informed clinical social workers who are effective, self-reflective, and ethical.*
- 2. Be an agent of social justice and social change, particularly with diverse and vulnerable populations.*
- 3. Offer an integrated curriculum that incorporates our practice communities' expertise, with a curriculum that models the interrelationship between knowledge, research, and practice wisdom.*
- 4. Provide a center of social work innovation and excellence that promotes evidence-informed practice, practice-informed research, and life-long learning.*
- 5. Maintain a faculty of distinction who are diverse in demographics, teaching and practice experiences, research interests, and theoretical perspectives.*
- 6. Promote a nurturing academic environment where strengths are honored to support the learning and professional growth of students.*

PROGRAM-DEFINED COMPETENCIES

The Winona State University MSW Program has extended and enhanced the nine Social Work Competencies stated in the 2015 EPAS to fit its area of specialization, Trauma-Informed Clinical Practice. To underscore their connections between the generalist competencies and their related practice behaviors of EPAS 2015, the program's specialized competencies and related practice behaviors follow much of the form and content of the EPAS counterparts. However, given the program's clinical orientation, specialized competencies 6-9 focus only on the individual client system level. Below are each of the programs' Trauma-Informed Clinical Social Work competencies, extended and/or enhanced from the 2015 EPAS competencies. Related practice behaviors are identified.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Trauma-informed clinical social workers understand the value base of the profession, its ethical standards, and relevant laws, and they employ this understanding to make their clinical social work practice excellent and distinctive from other clinical professions. Trauma-informed clinical social workers use clinical supervision and consultation, employ critical thinking skills, and apply frameworks of ethical decision-making in trauma-informed clinical practice, intra- and inter-agency relationships, research and evaluation, and policy arenas. Trauma-informed clinical social workers recognize the impact of their family of origin and developmental history on their

perspective and practice, the inherent power dynamics of clinician-client relationships and engage in reflective practice to ensure professional, effective, and proactive engagement. Trauma-informed clinical social workers demonstrate dedication to life-long learning and professional improvement, and they are committed to maintaining up-to-date and effective practice skills. Trauma-informed clinical social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and make appropriate, effective, and ethical use of technologies in practice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers are mindful of the potential impacts of trauma on all dimensions of practice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- use clinical supervision and consultation to continuously examine professional roles and boundaries and apply self-reflection to their practice to help ensure that their trauma-informed clinical social work practice is well-aligned with social work values and ethics;
- regularly and effectively apply ethical decision-making strategies and skills to their trauma-informed clinical social work practice; and
- demonstrate awareness of one's family of origin's cultural, psychodynamic, and behavioral attributes; one's developmental history; one's trauma history; as well as one's mental health—and reflect on how those factors impact one's ability to well-apply trauma-informed clinical social work services to clients.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Trauma-informed clinical social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity, life chances and experiences, emotional and physical well-being, social challenges and successes, and clinical social worker-client system relationships. Trauma-informed clinical social workers demonstrate humility, respect, reflection, a strive for cultural knowledge and understanding, and active awareness of historical and ongoing interpersonal and structural systems of marginalization, oppression, discrimination, and privilege that contribute to the context and content of client experience to help them provide effective clinical services that honor and center the lived experience of their clients. Trauma-informed clinical social workers are attuned to impacts of difference and diversity on client trauma histories, perceptions, and impacts as well as appropriate ways to address trauma with different/diverse client populations. Social workers:

- apply trauma-informed clinical social work theories and modalities in manners that are culturally appropriate and relevant to members of diverse, marginalized, and oppressed groups;
- indicate awareness of one's intersectionality and cultural, developmental, and trauma histories and how such factors may affect one's trauma-informed clinical social work practice;
- acknowledge the impact of clients' intersectional, cultural, developmental, and trauma issues on clients' well-being; and
- utilize clinical supervision to increase self-awareness and address any biases that may impact one's trauma-informed clinical social work practice.

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

Trauma-informed clinical social workers operationalize the core social work value of recognizing each person's inherent dignity and worth by employing an empowering approach in their practice. Their empowering approach addresses marginalization, oppression, discrimination, and systemic bias by focusing on client strengths and successes, and capacities for ingenuity, community, culture, political action, and direct action as possible means for client goal attainment as well as advances in social, economic, and environmental justice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers are attentive to issues related to historical traumas and micro-aggressions. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- contextualize all assessments utilizing lenses of social justice with awareness of the impacts of identity, micro-aggressions, historical traumas, recent traumas, social isolation, marginalization, discrimination, oppression, and inequitable distributions of material and social resources;
- advocate for social justice; and
- empower clients to effectively self-advocate and possibly advocate for others.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Trauma-informed clinical social workers utilize and assess scholarly literature, professional trainings, and their own practice evaluations to guide their development as practitioners. Trauma-informed clinical social workers maintain awareness of current and emerging evidence-informed practices. Trauma-informed clinical social workers use their ever-expanding knowledge, awareness, and practice wisdom to collaborate with clients to identify and employ effective strategies for goal attainment. Trauma-informed clinical social workers recognize the bio-psycho-social-spiritual nature of trauma and utilize evidence-informed approaches to address the various dimensions of trauma. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- actively pursue knowledge of current advances in trauma-informed clinical theories and practices, systemic interventions, and evidence-informed practices in trauma-informed clinical social work and related professions;
- demonstrate the ability to critically assess, select, and implement appropriate tools for use with various client populations while using a trauma-informed lens;
- regularly evaluate client progress and the effectiveness of one's trauma-informed clinical social work practice; and
- share practice experiences, developments, and knowledge with others.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Trauma-informed clinical social workers recognize how policies and laws can constrain or enhance clients' life conditions and opportunities as well as their own practice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers view themselves and, potentially, their clients as active, important participants in the policy evaluation, formation, and implementation processes. Trauma-informed clinical social workers understand their role in advocating for policy and legal reforms that better serve their clients and contribute to greater social, economic, and environmental justice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers strive for policies that promote and make more

readily available evidenced-informed approaches to heal trauma. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- are aware of policies, laws and other socio-structural factors that affect client welfare, assess the impacts of these policies and laws on client welfare and re-traumatization, and advocate for change that would enhance client welfare; and
- engage in creative, collaborative, political, and/or direct actions to raise awareness and forward change of unjust policies and laws and their adverse and prohibitive effects on client and other populations.

Competency 6: Engage (Individuals)

Trauma-informed clinical social workers recognize the importance of establishing effective client relationships to clients' collaboration and their identification and attainment of goals. In order to effectively engage with diverse sets of clients, clinical social workers understand the importance of differential use of self, appreciation of difference, and other clinical skills to effectively engage with different individual clients whose identities may reflect diverse families, groups, organizations, and communities. Trauma-informed clinical social workers understand the special complexities that may mark effective relationships with clients who have trauma histories. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- establish honoring trauma-informed clinical relationships with clients;
- identify ways to promote trauma-informed clinical collaboration with clients and promote their empowerment;
- demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties, trauma, and social issues and incorporate this understanding into client engagement;
- utilize appropriate means of engagement with clients who have trauma histories and/or are members of marginalized and oppressed groups; and
- reflect on their own issues of power and privilege and on how these issues may impact the trauma-informed clinical relationship.

Competency 7: Assess (Individuals)

Trauma-informed clinical social workers utilize an ongoing assessment process with their clients that informs their service provision. Clinical social worker assessments are multi-dimensional and holistic, addressing biological, psychological, social, cultural, spiritual life dimensions with foci including client strengths, resiliencies, coping strategies, intergenerational family patterns, oppression and discrimination experiences, and trauma history and adaptive responses. Trauma-informed clinical social workers may rely upon the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders with awareness of its strengths, shortcomings, and appropriateness. Trauma-informed clinical social workers engage clients in the assessment process to acquire data, to understand the meaning of the acquired data, and to understand the meanings and implications of the assessment. Trauma-informed clinical social workers efficiently and effectively communicate assessments with other professionals as appropriate. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties, trauma, and social issues and incorporate this understanding into assessments;
- appropriately select and modify clinical assessment tools with clients, especially those who have trauma histories and/or are members of marginalized and oppressed groups;
- incorporate an understanding of issues of trauma, social justice and inequities impact clients' difficulties into action planning; and
- reflect on their own issues of power and privilege and on how these issues may impact the trauma-informed clinical relationship.

Competency 8: Intervene (Individuals)

Trauma-informed clinical social workers utilize effective service modalities informed by extant research and multidimensional client assessment. Trauma-informed clinical social workers' service provision also reflects their knowledge and understanding of various psychotherapeutic theories and practices, crisis intervention techniques, community, and environmental resources. Trauma-informed clinical social workers value and incorporate collaboration with clients and other professionals to create and coordinate action plans. Trauma-informed clinical social workers continuously engage in assessment of their services and make revisions in actions plans with the goal of improving outcomes. Trauma-informed clinical social workers are familiar with and capable of properly using a variety of evidenced-informed trauma services. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- select and utilize appropriate and effective trauma-informed clinical interventions based on a critical knowledge of theory, research, and practice experience that reflect multidimensional assessment of the client system that addresses histories of trauma and oppression;
- shift perspectives and interventions to meet the needs, trauma histories, and feedback of clients while recognizing the importance of using multidimensional assessment to drive perspective and intervention selection; and
- demonstrate an ecological understanding of the transactional relationship between emotional/behavioral difficulties, trauma, and social issues and incorporate this understanding into their clinical social work interventions.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice (Individuals)

Trauma-informed clinical social workers continuously evaluate their practice using appropriate methods and informed by evidence-based practice standards and/or peer-reviewed research, consultation and supervision, and other professional development activities. Trauma-informed clinical social workers recognize the importance of incorporating client feedback into their evaluations, especially when assessing outcomes and effects of difference and diversity. Trauma-informed clinical social workers also recognize that practice evaluation must include examining barriers that may limit service availability and/or effectiveness. Trauma-informed clinical social workers refine their sensitivity to and skillsets for working with clients with a trauma history through ongoing assessment of practice. Trauma-informed clinical social workers:

- select and utilize appropriate methods to critically evaluate trauma-informed clinical social work intervention outcomes;
- select and utilize appropriate methods to critically evaluate trauma-informed clinical social work practice;
- evaluate programs to assess their effectiveness in meeting trauma-informed client (and community) needs; and
- demonstrate culturally-appropriate and trauma-informed design for research projects and evaluation studies.

COMMITMENT TO INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE

The WSU MSW Program recognizes that our individual differences can deepen our understanding of one another and the world around us, rather than divide us. In this program, people of all ethnicities, genders and gender identities, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, regions, and nationalities are strongly encouraged to share their rich array of perspectives and experiences. If you feel your differences may in some way isolate you from the MSW program’s community, or if you have a need for any specific accommodations, please speak with your instructor and/or your Guide early in the semester about your concerns and what we can do together to help you become an active and engaged member of our program and community. (Modified from the WSU “Commitment to Inclusive Excellence” statement).

Students’ Relationship with the Program

The WSU MSW Program values an empowered student body and strives to encourage and maintain empowerment through explicit statements of students’ rights and responsibilities and through providing explicit paths for student involvement in the program’s governance and operations and in WSU student life.

STUDENTS’ RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Rights

WSU MSW students have the right to:

- Receive a high-quality clinical social work education;
- Learn in an environment that is respectful, that values diversity and difference, that encourages excellence, and that is free from harassment;
- Engage in free and respectful exchanges of ideas;
- Have their voice thoughtfully heard by faculty and staff;
- Participate in MSW Program governance;
- Organize to form a collective voice on academic and non-academic issues;
- Participate in course and program assessments;
- Access to Academic Records per FERPA;
- Expect reasonable access to faculty for academic and professional guidance; and

- Expect faculty to be prepared and knowledgeable in order to teach effectively.

Responsibilities

WSU MSW Students are responsible for:

- Becoming familiar with the MSW Program policies and procedures by reading the MSW Student Handbook and Field Manual and by reading official program information distributed through US Mail, e-mail, and other means.
- Participating in courses and Professional Development Labs in manners that demonstrates mental and emotional preparation to be an open and engaged learner.
- Communicating with faculty when an issue arises that may pose unique challenges to their learning and professional development.
- Performing in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the WSU Student Conduct Code in all relationships with and within the program and its partners.

STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM OPERATIONS

MSW Program Faculty Meetings

Program faculty meetings are where program policies are discussed, developed, and modified. Program faculty meetings are available to all students to observe in-person or online, although discussions of issues involving particular students will not be available for observation. Students have an official participating presence in these meetings in the form of a representative selected by the MSW-SAW. That member is present to participate in the entire meeting, giving the students a voice in program operations including policy formation and modification, except when FERPA regulations prohibit their presence.

MSW Program Grievance Committee

All written grievance requests are reviewed by the program's Grievance Committee who advises faculty on resolutions of grieved issues. Two student members, appointed by the MSW-SAW occupy 2 of the at least 5 positions on the committee with the aggrieved student's permission. The Grievance Committee meetings are available for online access should committee members not be able to participate in person.

MSW Program Advisory Board

The program's Advisory Board provides guidance on curricular, policy, and administrative matters. Up to 2 advisory board members may be students appointed by the MSW-SAW, and they will share the rights and privileges of all advisory board members. Meetings will be available for online access should committee members not be able to participate in person.

MSW Program Curricular Committees

The program has a number of curricular committees whose responsibility to engage in ongoing review and revision of the specific parts of the program's curriculum. The MSW-SAW may appoint a student member to each of these committees so that student voices are integrated in

curriculum evolution. Meetings are available for online access should committee members not be able to participate in person.

MSW Program Faculty Hiring

All students have the opportunity to meet with candidates who interview for non-adjunct faculty positions. Student feedback on the candidates is solicited by the faculty hiring committee.

MSW Course and Program Assessment

Students are encouraged to participate in the formal and/or informal assessment of each course they take. Moreover, students are active participants in the ongoing program assessment process.

STUDENT ORGANIZING AND EMPOWERMENT

MSW Student Association of Workers (MSW-SAW)

The MSW Program views organizing as a fundamental right and as an important means of claiming power in all social arrangements. The program also is aware of challenges to student organizing posed by the hybrid nature of the program delivery. Therefore, the program provides various means of support to the student organization (including remote access to program meetings and technology to help students communicate remotely with one another), and the program is structured to include student voices in program operations.

Organization Governance and Relative Autonomy

The WSU MSW Program is committed to providing support to and incorporating the voice of students through the MSW Student Association of Workers (MSW-SAW). The MSW-SAW is self-governing and selects its own leadership structure and leaders. It is empowered with self-determination; it selects its own activities and positions. Per WSU policies of official student organizations, a faculty advisor provides support and guidance to the MSW-SAW. The advisor attends MSW-SAW meeting only at the request of the MSW-SAW and will be present only for agenda items specified by the MSW-SAW leadership.

Program Support

The MSW Program provides a variety of means of support to the MSW-SAW. For instance, the Program supports the MSW-SAW's request for funding through WSU Student Government. The program provides physical and virtual spaces for MSW-SAW meetings. The MSW-SAW has access to office support such as faxing and copying, and the MSW-SAW has a presence on the Program's Microsoft Teams site. Also, as noted above the MSW-SAW has a faculty advisor and other faculty provide support through consultations and presentations at MSW-SAW meetings.

Roles in MSW Program Operations

The program provides a voice for students to express and advocate for their interests through the following program structures:

- The MSW-SAW may select a representative to participate in MSW Program Faculty meetings. The representative will be able to share input on policy formation and evolution. Meetings are available for online participation.
- The MSW-SAW may select up to 2 representatives to fully participate in the MSW Program's Advisory Board. Meetings are available for online participation.
- The MSW-SAW may occupy 2 of the at least 5 positions on the program's grievance committee—with the aggrieved student's permission. Meetings are available for online participation.
- The MSW-SAW may appoint a member to each of the program's curricular committees.
- The MSW-SAW may provide input on non-adjunct faculty searches. Meetings are available for online participation.
- The MSW-SAW may appoint a representative to consult with faculty guides on student conduct/behavior issues that may result in disciplinary student status determinations if the student(s) in question requests the assistance of the MSW-SAW

Other MSW Student Organizations

The MSW Program supports and encourages the formation and operation of other student organizations. These organizations may focus on action regarding a particular issue, on social justice matters, on student-specific issues, on an affinity of a group of students, or on any other matter of concern to students. MSW faculty supports these organizations as appropriate and pending their availability as long as the organization abides within the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics. Any student organization may seek faculty sponsorship toward official WSU student organization status.

WSU Student Senate

MSW students may run for a seat in the university's Student Senate. Program faculty are committed to supporting any MSW student who wishes to pursue this role. The Student Senate has voices in the amount of student service fees collected along with tuition and the utilization of those funds. The Student Senate also has input on a variety of other university-wide policies.

Student Resources

ADVISING/GUIDE

The WSU MSW Program recognizes advising as a faculty privilege and responsibility. We view advising as a supportive process in which students of diverse backgrounds are guided toward success in our program and in their professional social work careers. The supportive relationship between advisor and student is particularly important in a hybrid program wherein students may have limited face-to-face contact with faculty and fellow students. Our commitment to professional and academic advising is reflected in our program's advisement structure and policy.

Students are assigned a "Faculty Guide" (i.e., advisor) as they begin the MSW curriculum. Typically, this Guide will be with the student through graduation. It is expected that students will have one Guide throughout their MSW program. However, a student may be assigned a different Guide at the discretion of the MSW program director, and program staffing issues may require Guide changes. A student's Guide is the instructor for the entire "Professional Development" course sequence that parallels his/her enrollment in the program. This structure ensures continuous and seamless advising support. The MSW program's advising policy mandates regular and ongoing contact with their guides. Each student is encouraged via their participation in the professional development courses to have a minimum of two face-to-face or online conferences with their Guide each semester. Guides and their student advisees may have additional meetings as needed and/or desired. It is expected that the student and Guide develop a rich professional relationship.

Only regular (i.e., non-adjunct) faculty who have been trained on the roles and responsibilities of a guide serve as a faculty guide (unless staffing issues dictate otherwise). In the role of professional development course instructor, the Guide:

- assists students in developing academic and professional goals and monitoring progress towards reaching these goals;
- helps students integrate different components of the curriculum and professional experiences into a cohesive professional social work identity; and
- supports students' integration of their curricular and field accomplishments into a professional development portfolio.

The Guide also will perform the role of academic monitor and advisor through:

- monitoring a student's performance on key assignments and in courses;
- involvement in discussions with a student about significant academic performance concerns, through helping a student navigate the curriculum; and
- addressing any student requests for adjustments or exceptions to program policies.

Finally, the Guide will perform the role of professional advisor to:

- help a student connect course content to a student's specific professional interests;
- guide a student in preparation for an appropriate and successful practicum;

- coach a student in the development and demonstration of internalized professional values and ethics; and
- plan for professional social work employment and ongoing career development.

STUDENT SUCCESS TIPS

Students are the best judge of their abilities and resources needed to take on any educational and professional opportunity and/or challenge. The faculty and staff at the WSU-MSW Program honor and accept students' right to self-determination and are available to help students make informed decisions that best match their educational and professional goals.

The following tips offer “collective wisdom” from the research literature and experts in the field of hybrid and/or online education that have been identified as best practices for student success.

Time Management

- Graduate study coursework is more intense and demanding than undergrad and will require more time and commitment.
- Your life is busy, so diligence in managing time for reading, assignments, and large projects is extremely important.
- Scheduling regular times throughout the week to study and complete work works well for many people.

Stay Motivated

- Staying motivated is perhaps the single most important element if you want to accomplish your personal, professional, and academic goals. Some tips:
 - Keep the end goal in mind; remember the ultimate goal--the degree, for instance, or career advancement--and stay motivated by working toward it, regardless of how long it is ultimately going to take.
 - As you work toward your end goal, one effective strategy is taking large goals (e.g., complete a class) and breaking them down into smaller tasks (e.g., complete the reading for a week; start on that paper), for which you may develop smaller-scale goals.

Self-Care

- Students should plan time for rest and rejuvenation and reward themselves as academic tasks are accomplished. If you take care of yourself and your body, you will perform and think better. Some tips:
 - Eat in a balanced way for your body.
 - Try to get sufficient sleep and try going to bed and waking up at the same time (i.e., establish a pattern).
 - Start your day right by practicing meditation, exercise, and/or having a healthy breakfast.
 - Infuse comfort and joy into your day (e.g., read/listen for pleasure during the commute to work, treat yourself to a special coffee, etc.).

- Socialize, do not close yourself off from others.
- Share your wins and fails with peers, hang out with friends, or volunteer for a cause.
- Connect with family (often your greatest supporters), give them the love and attention they deserve—your studies won't love you back; your family will.
- Reward yourself! For example, at the end of a module, treat yourself to a celebration dinner, coffee, spa, day of no work, etc., or document your success in a journal—after all, you are AWESOME.
- Finally, sometimes we just need to talk with someone. Consider campus counseling services; call 507-285-7100.

Plan for Child and Eldercare Issues

- If you have children or care for an elderly person, you may need to plan for their care to allow you to study and complete your classwork. Be creative when scouting for childcare/eldercare options. For example:
 - Check with family members; ask!
 - Check with older neighbors; many retired people welcome odd jobs that can be done from home.
 - Form a Parent Pool with fellow program students. Some of your fellow classmates may live close to you—and they may be parents, too. Tap those connections. Ask people in your class if they want to start a parent pool. You could watch your classmate's kids on certain days if they watch your kids some other day.

Patience

- For some students, a graduate program is the first time they are challenged academically, and they often experience many changes in a short amount of time. Rather than getting frustrated by all the changes and learning curves, students should remind themselves that it is normal to feel stressed when making significant life changes. However, you know yourself best, and if you think you need help—ask; we are here to help you succeed.

Work Hard and Smart

- It is no secret that professors at the graduate level push students to their maximum, to ensure students have what it takes to succeed and to help them better understand their capabilities. For example, it is not uncommon for students to spend multiple hours per day completing reading assignments. Students should maximize this time. Rather than simply reading the material without any goals, think about what you want to take from the text. Develop a strategy and then implement your plan.

Critical Thinking

- Students enroll in graduate programs to increase their knowledge, but that does not mean they should blindly accept everything they are told during the program. Critical thinking separates successful learners from average students, empowering them to analyze the materials presented, ask questions, and make educated judgment calls.

Develop a Support System

- People do not handle going back to school in the same way. Some are very excited about going to graduate school, so they tell the world about their new courses, while others are quiet. Keeping quiet about graduate school may make it difficult for you to garner support.
- No matter the level of organization and focus a graduate student possesses, no one can go it alone. Having a solid support system comprised of family, friends, mentors, classmates, and professors can mean the difference between success and failure. Also, keep in mind that not everyone has a support system and that some of your classmates might be looking for help. Support those around you, and they may support you in return. So reach out, connect with peers and professors.
- Seek support from your employer; for example, helping your employer understand school tasks, responsibilities, and time commitment of coursework. Also, some employers will subsidize at least a part of employee's tuition and training bills. Do not forget to ask about tuition assistance plans at your place of employment. If you work for a small company, try asking for tuition assistance to cover the expense of specific courses that may directly correlate to your work.

Research, Writing, and Public Speaking Skills

- Even more so than at the undergraduate level, learners enrolled in graduate programs are called upon to submit sophisticated and polished assignments. Students who think their research, APA formatting, writing, or public speaking skills are in need of improvement have several options. Reach out to mentors with strong skills in these areas; practice peer-reviewing of assignments; keep practicing; and take advantage of available services listed in this handbook.

Technology Considerations

- Students should be comfortable using a computer for completing their assignments, doing research on the internet, and conducting synchronous communication (e.g., participating in a live chat) and asynchronous communication (e.g., posting comments to a discussion board).
- Although owning a personal computer is not mandatory, it is a good idea. If a student does not own their own computer, it is advantageous to have access to one several times per week.
- High-speed internet access is not necessary, but the faster the connection speed, the faster material will download, and the less you will have to wait to continue with your assignment.

WSU RESOURCES

Below is a list of resources available to WSU MSW students and brief descriptions of each resource. Click on the resource name to visit a webpage with corresponding information. In situations where program information differs from the information found in these university-wide sites, please follow official program information.

Kristi Ziegler is the WSU-R Ombudsperson. If you feel you are not able to easily and fairly access any of the services listed below, Kristi is available to help you find a fair and prompt solution. She is a great person to advocate for and with you. You can contact her at KZiegler@winona.edu or 507-285-7157, and her office is on the RCTC campus (SS 125).

| Resource | Brief Description |
|--|--|
| <u>Access Services</u> | Access Services serves Winona State University students and faculty by providing academic accommodations for students who present qualifying documentation. |
| <u>Brightspace (D2L)</u> | Brightspace (aka "D2L") is the online home of most of your coursework. |
| <u>Counseling Services</u> | Counseling & Wellness Services supports the WSU community by offering a range of mental health services designed to enhance student growth and success. Appointments are available in Rochester and Winona. |
| <u>Discounted Software Purchases</u> | Winona State offers students a variety of software to use. Some of this software is distributed through a service called On the Hub that you can access with this link. By using On the Hub, one can save a lot of money by getting a discounted price on select software (e.g., MS Office, VMWare). |
| <u>Financial Aid Office</u> | This is a great place to start answering your questions about financial assistance through WSU. |
| <u>Graduate Assistantships</u> | This link takes you to the official Graduate Assistant procedures document that details eligibility and compensation rates. |
| <u>Graduate Student Forms</u> | On this page, one can find links to just about any WSU graduate student form one can imagine. |
| <u>Health and Wellness Services</u> | This office provides proactive physical and mental health care to Winona State University on campus and via distance. |
| <u>Health Insurance</u> | This site provides information on the health insurance exchanges available in Minnesota and neighboring states. |
| <u>ID Cards</u> | This link provides you with a form to get your WSU ID card from off-campus. |

| | |
|--|--|
| <u>Inclusion and Diversity Services</u> | At this site, You will find information about our programs and services, scholarships, cultural diversity and outreach, cultural clubs and a calendar of events. |
| <u>Laptop Leasing Program</u> | WSU MSW students have the option to lease a laptop (Mac or Windows) from WSU. |
| <u>Library</u> | The Darrell W. Krueger Library is the center of research, discovery, and creative output at Winona State University with a mission to provide the WSU community with the information resources and services they need in an easily accessible online environment. |
| <u>Minimum Personal Computer and Internet Standards</u> | Learn what you need to successfully participate in online learning at WSU. |
| <u>Registrar (Record and Registration)</u> | Find information about your academic records, DARS, Grades, etc. |
| <u>School of Graduate Studies</u> | Policies and services offered by the WSU School of Graduate Studies (of which the MSW program is a part) may be found here. |
| <u>Student Senate</u> | Student Senate is the governing body of the Winona State University Student Association. In its capacity, Student Senate acts as the recognized voice and bargaining unit for all students at WSU. |
| <u>Tech Support</u> | The Technical Support Center (TSC) assists, educates and serves students, faculty, and staff with hardware and software. Tech Support helps all students access email, connect to wi-fi, learn to use campus-supported software, and print from their personally-owned devices, and it provides wrap-around tech support for students leasing a laptop from WSU. |
| <u>Technology Survival Guide <u>Mac</u> or <u>PC</u></u> | These pages are designed to give students more information on how to perform important tasks on a Mac or PC that will be crucial to their time as a WSU student. |
| <u>Tuition Costs</u> | This page displays estimated tuition and fees. |
| <u>Veteran's Affairs</u> | The Winona State Veterans Affairs Office was created in cooperation with the Office of Admissions to provide information and assistance for veterans and their families as they pursue their education at the university. |
| <u>Writing Center</u> | The Writing Center offers free, individualized instruction online during any stage of writing, reading or research. |
| <u>WSU Academic Calendar</u> | Here you can find a calendar listing all official WSU dates, including official holidays. Please note that because of the "block" structure of the MSW program course offerings, some listed dates may not align exactly with Program |

| | |
|---|---|
| | dates. In cases of such conflicts, please follow Program (and course) dates. |
| <u>WSU Academic Policies</u> | This site lists all standard academic policies for the WSU School of Graduate Studies. Please note that MSW students accepted into the Full-time pace program tracks students are able to take more than 12 credits per term. |
| <u>WSU Student Conduct Code</u> | Here you can find basic expectations of the conduct of all WSU students. |

OTHER RESOURCES

- [Association of Social Work Boards \(licensing exam study guides and more\)](#)
- [Council on Social Work Education](#)
- [CSWE Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards](#)
- [Iowa Board of Social Work](#)
- [Minnesota Board of Social Work](#)
- [Minnesota Department of Human Services](#)
- [NASW Code of Ethics](#)
- [NASW Joblink](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers](#)
- [Wisconsin Board of Social Work](#)

Admission

HOW TO APPLY

Using the following link provided, log in and begin using the [WSU School of Graduate Studies Online Application](#). You will either use your existing StarID or you will be prompted to create a new StarID.

More detailed and the latest application instructions are available on the WSU MSW Program website: <https://www.winona.edu/socialwork/graduate.asp>

BASIC ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS/CRITERIA

Admission to the WSU MSW Program is granted on a selective basis. Applicants for admission must have:

- An earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association.
- Undergraduate coursework in the liberal arts that addressed socio-cultural, psychological, and biological determinants of human behavior and diverse cultures, social conditions, and social issues. Below is a table of generally accepted courses for each of these content areas. Other courses may be considered if petitioned by the applicant.

| Content Areas | Examples of Generally Accepted Courses |
|---|--|
| Sociocultural Determinants (2 courses minimum) | Intro/General Sociology; Social Problems; Intro Sociocultural Anthropology |
| Psychological Determinants (2 courses minimum) | Intro/General Psychology; Comparative Psychology; Evolutionary Psychology; Developmental Psychology |
| Biological Determinants (1 course minimum) | Human Biology; Human Anatomy & Physiology; Behavioral Biology; Evolutionary Ecology |
| Human/Social Diversity (1 course minimum) | Comparative Sociology; Race and Ethnicity; Human Diversity; Cross-Cultural Anthropology; Designated Social Work Diversity Course |

- Personal values that are consistent with professional social work values and ethics.
- Personal qualities needed for agency-based clinical social work practice with oppressed and disadvantaged populations.
- Demonstrated and/or well-reasoned commitment to the field of social work.

REGULAR STANDING AND ADVANCED STANDING STATUS ADMISSIONS

One can apply for admission to the MSW program as either a Regular Standing student (60 credit program) or an Advanced Standing student (42 credit program).

Regular Standing Status Admission

Regular Standing students are admitted to the MSW program each year. In addition to the basic admission criteria described above, eligibility for Regular Standing admission also includes:

- An overall GPA of 3.0 or better. Applicants with an overall GPA below 3.0 may be admitted on a provisional basis. Students accepted provisionally must achieve a GPA of 3.2 or better in their first 11 MSW credits to be fully accepted into the program.

A person who holds a baccalaureate degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program (includes degrees recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors) may not be admitted as a regular-standing student; they must apply for Advanced Standing status.

Advanced Standing Status Admission

Advanced Standing students are admitted into the MSW program each year. Advanced Standing students complete 42 credits (as opposed to 60 for Regular Standing students) to earn their MSW degree. This credit reduction helps to ensure that students who have earned a BSW from a CSWE-accredited program (includes degrees recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors) do not repeat what has been previously mastered in their BSW education.

Eligibility for Advanced Standing admission consideration is determined as follows:

1. An applicant who earned their BSW from a CSWE-accredited program (*includes degrees recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors*):
 - a. within 7 years of their anticipated MSW program start date and who meets or exceeds the program's 3.4 undergraduate social work GPA threshold is eligible for admission consideration.
 - b. within 7 years of their anticipated MSW program start date but did not earn an undergraduate social work GPA of at least 3.4 is eligible for provisional admission consideration.
 - c. more than 7 years before their anticipated MSW program start date but did earn an undergraduate social work GPA of at least 3.4 is eligible for provisional admission consideration.

- d. more than 7 years before their anticipated MSW program start date and who did not earn an undergraduate social work GPA of at least 3.4 is not eligible for admission consideration unless they petition for special consideration.

NOTE: A provisionally-admitted student must attain a GPA of at least 3.2 in their first 11 credits of MSW coursework in order to proceed in the program without provisions.

The program recognizes that a potential Advanced Standing applicant who does not meet the above criteria may still be a good candidate for admission to our program. We strongly encourage such potential applicants to pursue a petition for applicant eligibility in which the potential applicant provides additional information that documents their achievements in their undergraduate social work program. A faculty member will be happy to provide guidance regarding their preparation of a petition. Submitted petitions are reviewed by the Program Director and one other faculty and result in:

- unconditional application consideration eligibility to apply to the program;
- conditional application consideration eligibility that promises application consideration eligibility after the demonstration of sufficient achievement in the completion of specified additional educational requirements that address areas where sufficient achievement is not evidenced; or
- denial of application consideration.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

A completed application consists of:

- Solicited demographic and educational information;
- Official transcript copies from all attended higher education institutions;
- Completed application for the WSU School of Graduate Studies;
- Video Personal Statement
- Written Personal Statement
- Three completed Recommendation Forms
 - At least 1 reference must be from a supervisor of a volunteering, employment, or internship experience;
 - Other references may be prepared by other supervisors, instructors, social work professionals, etc.;
 - References from family members, close personal friends, or WSU MSW Faculty will not be accepted;
- Statement of part-time or full-time preference
 - Indication of preference for completed the program at the part-time pace (i.e., 1 course plus practicum per 7-week block) or at the full-time pace (i.e., 2 courses plus practicum per 7-week block).

Application Processing

Policies

- Only completed applications are reviewed.

- Complete applications are accepted and processed until all spaces in the program are awarded to other applicants.
- Each completed application is reviewed by one non-adjunct Faculty.
- An application that receives less than 75% of the available points may be sent for an additional review under the following conditions:
 - The application received 65-74.99% of the available points;
 - The initial reviewer recommends a second review.
- If $\geq 75\%$ of the available points (from a sole review or from the average of two reviews) are awarded to an applicant, the applicant to be offered program admission.
- If $\geq 65\%$ of the available points (from a sole review or from the average of two reviews) are awarded to an applicant, the applicant to be denied program admission.
- A meeting of the majority of non-adjunct Faculty will determine the disposition of applications that received 65.01-74.00% of the available points.
- Final admission decisions are non-negotiable.

Procedures

- Applications are completed, retained, and reviewed in a secure online platform managed by Embark.com.
- Once an applicant completes all required application fields of the program application, the Embark.com platform marks the application as complete and notifies the program's administrative assistant.
- The program's administrative assistant confirms that the applicant's WSU School of Graduate Studies is complete.
 - Once the Graduate Studies application is confirmed as complete, the administrative assistant marks the entire application process as completed within the Embark.com system, and that system randomly assigns the application to a faculty reviewer.
 - If the assigned faculty reviewer has a conflict of interest that may inhibit their ability to fairly evaluate the application, the reviewer notifies the program's administrative system, and the application is reassigned.
- The faculty reviewer is asked to complete their application review with two weeks of their initial notification that the application awaits their review.
- The faculty reviews the application within the secure Embark.com platform.
- The faculty reviewer awards points as follows:
 - Average Score of 3 Recommendation Forms (0-150 points)
 - Video Personal Statement (0-425 points), consists of scores for:
 - Alignment of personal and professional values
 - Depth of thought/thoughtfulness
 - Self-reflection
 - Demonstrated ability to act on values
 - Effective oral communication
 - Written Personal Statement (0-425 points), consists of scores for:
 - Motivation to pursue an MSW

- Understanding of Social Work profession
 - Pertinent experience
 - Self-reflection
 - Goodness of fit with the WSU MSW Program
 - Effective written communication
- Optional “Gestalt” points (0-50 points)
 - These are to reward an applicant for outstanding attributes that may not have been sufficiently accounted for in the standard evaluation items. A faculty reviewer who awards Gestalt points must provide a brief narrative explaining the award.
- The reviewer provides an overall recommendation for the disposition of the application:
 - I recommend the applicant, without reservation, for admission to the program.
 - I have some reservations but would recommend the applicant as a good candidate for admission to the program.
 - I have substantial doubts, but I think the applicant should be provided the chance to demonstrate their abilities.
 - I feel the candidate is not suited for the program.
- If a total review score is less than 75% of the possible points, the reviewer can request that a second reviewer complete an additional review of the application. If this occurs, the two reviewer scores will be averaged for a final review score.
- A second reviewer will automatically be assigned should the total score of the first review fall between 65% and 74.99% of the total possible score (1000 pts).
- The Program Director reviews the total scores of all fully-reviewed applications.
- If an application’s total score is 75% or greater, the Program Director notifies the applicant of their program admission (see below).
- If an application’s total score is less than 65%, the Program Director notifies the applicant that they have been denied admission to the program (see below).
- If an application’s score is between 65% and 74.99%, the application is presented to the entire faculty who deliberate to determine the disposition of the application (accept or not accept). One of the two procedures mentioned just above will be followed.
- Applicants who are not offered admission may be offered the opportunity to be placed on a wait list from which top-ranked applicants will be offered admission to any opened positions.
- Application review will cease when all available program spaces have been filled or no less than 6 weeks prior to the beginning of the term when the applicant would begin the program.

Program Standards, Policies, and Procedures

Winona State University and the WSU School of Graduate Studies publish minimum standards and policies for academic performance and student conduct. The MSW program implements a number of policies that complement, extend, and/or further specify the standard institutional academic standards and policies. The standards, policies, and procedures stated below apply to all students enrolled in WSU's MSW Program. The program's general orientation is to support the learning and growth of students who demonstrate academic and professional issues requiring improvement. However, in some circumstances disciplinary action may be necessary to ensure the well-being of other students, faculty, staff, the program, clients, partner agencies, and/or the community.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Academic Integrity

Honesty is a cornerstone for learning and for the social work profession; therefore, honesty is expected of all participants in the MSW program (i.e., students, staff, faculty, and guests). Concerns about dishonesty outside of participation in a particular course should be directed to the Program Director. Dishonesty in a particular course should be reported to the course instructor who may consult with a student's Guide and request an Assessment of Student Progress. Examples of course-based dishonesty include:

- Plagiarism (see <https://www.winona.edu/sld/academicintegrity.asp> for plagiarism definitions and guides to avoid plagiarism as well as for the university's academic integrity policies);
- Misrepresentation or alteration of any materials related to academic records; and
- Any form of cheating.

More information about academic integrity may be found in the WSU Student Conduct Code (<https://www.winona.edu/sld/studentconductcode.asp>).

Failure to abide by principles of academic integrity will be met with consequences determined by the course instructor in consultation with the student's Guide, other MSW faculty, the Field Director, and/or the Program Director.

Credit for Life Experience

The WSU MSW Program does not grant credit for life experience under any circumstances. The program's policy on credit for life experience aligns with CSWE Accreditation Standard 3.1.5.

Grading

All courses must be taken on a letter grade basis. The following grading scale is used:

| Letter Grade | Definition | Grade Points |
|--------------|--|--------------|
| A | Substantially Exceeds Expectations | 4 |
| B | Meets Expectations | 3 |
| C | Does Not Meet Expectations, but Acceptable | 2 |
| <C | Not Acceptable/Fail | 0 |

Any grade lower than a C will not count for credit in the MSW Program. Upon earning an initial grade of D or F, a student will be placed on probation. Any subsequent grade of D or F will result in dismissal from the Program.

A student earning a C for a final course grade should contact their instructor and Faculty Guide and outline a plan for improvement that will be placed in their student file. Students earning 2 or more Cs will be placed on academic probation, and students earning 3 or more Cs will be dismissed from the Program.

A Grade Point Average of 3.0 or higher in the WSU MSW Program is required for graduation.

An In-Progress (IP) grade may be granted by the instructor for special cases when circumstances prevent the student from completing course requirements by the end of the semester, and the student has completed at least 50% of their work product for the course and has earned a passing grade for the sum of that work product. Within these parameters, the issuance of an IP is at the discretion of the instructor. The instructor must use a student's WSU email address to notify a student receiving an IP of that fact and of the terms required to satisfy the IP as well as the consequences of not fully addressing the IP satisfaction terms. A copy of this informational e-mail will be added to the student's program file. An IP grade must be resolved by the end of the semester (including summer) subsequent to the semester in which the IP was issued or the course grade becomes an F.

A student has the right to appeal a final course grade. The process for grade appeals appears below in the Procedures section.

Grievances

A student has the right to seek a remedy for a dispute or disagreement. No retaliation of any kind shall be taken against a student for participation in a complaint or grievance. The MSW program's "Grievance Procedures," detailed below, must be followed.

Independent Study

A student may request to take an Independent Study course with an MSW program faculty member. An independent Study course is meant to provide a student with a unique, in-depth learning opportunity that does not replicate the content of other courses. An Independent Study course may be taken as an extra elective, or it can substitute for a course in the MSW 650-679 sequence. A student must receive approval from both his/her Guide and the proposed instructor prior to registering for the Independent Study.

Leave of Absence

A student who wishes to take a leave from their MSW education may petition to do so through their Guide. A student who is on an approved leave of absence will be able to register for courses upon their return without special registration permission. A student may be granted up to three semesters (i.e., equivalent of one calendar year) of approved leave. A student who leaves the program for two semesters without approval will be dropped from the MSW program.

Professional Development Lab Attendance and Participation

Professional Development Labs (PDLs) comprise a unique and core attribute of the WSU MSW Program. Their primary purpose is to provide valuable professional growth and development opportunities that cannot be replicated online or through independent study. A secondary and related purpose of the PDLs is to provide a unique, strategic professional socialization venue that provides trademark professional development elements to the program's students.

Given the Professional Development Labs' central, singular programmatic role, student attendance and participation in them is a program requirement. One PDL is scheduled each semester (including summer). Students are required to attend the PDL for each semester in which they are enrolled in MSW courses. This policy is enforced through the Professional Development Project course sequence. Students are enrolled in a Professional Development Project course each semester, and 40% of a student's grade in that course is derived from a student's attendance and participation in the *entirety* of the semester's Professional Development Lab. Therefore, if a student does not attend and participate in the entirety of a semester's PDL, the student will fail that semester's Professional Development Project course. As stated in the program's "Grading" policy, a failing grade automatically places a student on academic probation.

The program recognizes that a personal emergency, weather emergency, and/or other factors may interfere with a student's ability to attend a PDL in its entirety. A student who is unable to attend and participate in an entire PDL for reasons such as those just noted and can provide documentation of the reason(s) will receive a non-negotiable 20% grade penalty in their Professional Development Project course rather than the standard 40% grade penalty. The reduced penalty for PDL absence is available only once during a student's enrollment in the program. Any subsequent absences (full or partial and regardless of reason) from a PDL will receive the full 40% grade penalty without exception.

Program Completion Timeline

A student must complete their MSW within five calendar years (including any Leaves of Absence) from the date of their initial enrollment in the MSW Program.

Program Options

As described in the MSW Program Admissions Policy, students can be accepted into the program as either "Advanced Standing" or "Regular Standing" (see Admissions Policy for further definition

of these options). Regular and Advanced Standing status is determined at time of admission. Course sequencing has been carefully planned, therefore students must follow the program of study for the program option for which they were accepted.

All admitted students are expected to follow either a part-time pace or a full-time pace. Part-time students will enroll for between 3 and 10 credits each semester as specified in their program of study. Full-time students will enroll for between 11 and 16 credits each semester as specified in their program of study. Deviations from a student's program of study will only be granted in extraordinary circumstances, and the program makes no guarantees of curricular offerings for students who do not follow the prescribed programs of study. However, a student may petition to switch their pace status. Petitions are submitted through the student's Guide. If the Guide supports the student's petition, it will be approved on a space-available basis.

Student's Standing in Program

Beginning with the review of a potential student's application and continuing through graduation, one's performance in the program is continuously assessed so as to be able to provide appropriate learning supports and challenges as well as to provide a student a clear understanding of his/her status in the program. The procedures for conducting an Assessment of Student Performance are described in the Procedures section of this document. The below are the possible student standing statuses:

- **Provisionally Admitted, Regular Standing:** A Regular Standing student who is provisionally admitted must meet any specific terms of their provisional admission (e.g., complete unmet prerequisites) and earn a 3.2 or better GPA from the first 14 credits of the MSW Program. Failure to meet these terms will result in either Probation, Suspension, or Dismissed status assignment through the Assessment of Student Performance process.
- **Provisionally Admitted, Advanced Standing:** An Advanced Standing student who is provisionally admitted must meet any specific terms of their provisional admission and earn a 3.2 or better GPA from the first 11 credits of the MSW Program. Failure to meet these terms will result in either Probation, Suspension, or Dismissed status assignment through the Assessment of Student Performance process.
- **Good Standing:** This status is awarded to a student who has completed at least one 7-week block of coursework, maintains a 3.0 or higher MSW Program GPA, and has no more than one C grade, and has no outstanding performance issues.
- **Probation:** A student may be placed on probation for not meeting the requirements of the "Good Standing" status and/or for failing to meet the professional performance standards as determined through an Assessment of Student Progress. A student placed on probation will prepare a written contract with their Guide that specifies the terms for returning to "Good Standing," and this contract will be placed in the student's file. A student on probation may continue to enroll in and complete coursework in the Program. Failure to return to "Good Standing" after one semester will result in "Suspension" or "Dismissed" status assignment following an Assessment of Student Performance.

- **Suspended:** A student may be placed on suspension if they fail to resolve their probationary status after one semester or if they have demonstrated academic and/or professional issues determined through an Assessment of Student Progress to be sufficiently serious as to interrupt their progress in the program. A suspended student works with their Guide and the Program Director to determine what must occur for the suspension to be satisfactorily resolved. A suspended student will not be allowed to enroll in further MSW courses (including practicum) until the terms of their suspension have been satisfactorily resolved. If suspension resolution is not attained after two semesters, an Assessment of Student Progress will be completed, and the student will be dismissed from the program.
- **Dismissed:** A student may be dismissed from the program for failure successfully resolve a suspension within two consecutive semesters or for violations of the program's Academic and Professional Standards and Policies determined through an Assessment of Student Progress to be sufficiently severe as to warrant removal from the Program.

A student has the right to contest/grieve their student status and any other aspect of their Assessment of Student Performance. That grievance procedure is outlined below.

Writing Standards

Clear and effective written communication is required in the social work profession. Students should be committed to continuous improvement of their writing skills. Toward that end, all students are encouraged to make use of online writing tutorials offered by the WSU Writing Center (<https://www.winona.edu/english/writingcenter.asp>) and of the Tutor.com offered through D2L Brightspace (<https://winona.learn.minnstate.edu/d2l/home>). A student whose writing is poor and not improving may be placed on probation and asked to provide their Guide with a detailed writing improvement plan.

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND POLICIES

Demonstration of Social Work Values and Ethics

All students agree to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics when applying to the MSW Program. A student's behavior should demonstrate that commitment to professional social work values and ethics in all contexts. Recognizing that perfection in this area is difficult to attain, students and faculty are encouraged to support one another in recognizing shortcomings and fostering improvement. However, demonstrations of departure from these standards may result in a student's probation, suspension, or dismissal after an Assessment of Student Performance.

Appropriate Self-Care, Self-Regulation, and Self-Awareness

Social work can be a demanding profession that takes a toll on oneself. Successful strategies for maintaining emotional well-being and resilience and being able to provide optimal service to our clients vary, but they should include practices that support self-care, self-regulation, and self-awareness. Many of us in this profession have histories that make these practices even more important. Again, perfection in this area is not required, but demonstration of the employment

of sufficient practices is expected. Students, faculty, and especially a Guide with whom a student has developed a close professional relationship, are encouraged to support one another in recognizing shortcomings and fostering improvement. However, demonstrations of departure from these standards may result in a student's probation, suspension, or dismissal after an Assessment of Student Performance.

Conduct/Behavior with Others

Collegial respect is another cornerstone for learning and for the social work profession. It, too, is expected of all participants in the MSW program. Collegial respect does not mean mindless acceptance of or passive agreement with course material, other's opinions, rules and regulations, etc. It does include engagement in respectful, thoughtful, and open debate, completing required coursework, avoidance of intentionally disruptive behaviors that interfere with the coursework and/or the learning of others, and avoidance of discriminatory or abusive language and/or behavior.

The abilities to demonstrate empathy, project warmth, and to develop trusting relationships with a diverse array of individuals, groups, and organizations are cornerstones of professional social work practice. MSW students should be able to form close, trusting, professional relationships with clients and others, and they should be able to manage intense emotional expressions that may come from people utilizing social work services.

Social workers recognize, develop, and maintain appropriate boundaries so that they can well-serve clients. MSW Students are expected to strive to do the same.

Students and faculty are encouraged to support one another in recognizing shortcomings and fostering improvement. However, demonstrations of departure from these standards may result in a student's probation, suspension, or dismissal after an Assessment of Student Performance.

Social Media Use

Students are expected to adhere to the standards and guidelines of the social work profession when interacting with classmates, Field Instructors, and colleagues using social media or social networking sites. Establishing informal relationships with faculty and clients through social media and networking sites can make it difficult to maintain professional boundaries and are thus not appropriate.

Students should be aware that all social networking postings can potentially be made available to the public at large including their prospective clients, employers and colleagues. Privacy settings are never absolute, and confidential or personal information about peers, clients, co-workers, and faculty should not be posted online. It is expected that students follow confidentiality standards in both face-to-face and online environments.

Before communicating online, students are cautioned to think through carefully their postings which reflect on themselves, their field agency, WSU, the WSU MSW Program, and the social

work profession itself. All postings should be professional and respectful in tone including those “private” posts between site members. Violations of the NASW Code of Ethics as evidenced online will result in an Assessment of Student Performance and possible standing status change. Please note the applicable portions of the NASW Code of Ethics. (This discussion of social media standards was adapted from the *MSW Student Handbook* of the Indiana University School of Social Work.)

PROCEDURES

Assessment of Student Performance

To nurture a supportive and productive learning and professional growth environment, a student’s academic and professional well-being and performance are monitored and assessed on an ongoing basis. A student’s Guide has primary responsibility for this monitoring and for respectfully sharing feedback with the student. Sources of data for the monitoring and assessment include a student’s program file (application data, grades, etc.), interactions with a student, and information offered by instructors and/or the Field Director to the Guide for the purposes of providing support and sharing concerns. Scheduled assessments are completed by a student’s Guide within two weeks of the end of each grading term. Additional assessment may be conducted by the Guide at any time per the request of the student, the student’s Guide, an instructor, the Field Director, or the Program Director. Again, the primary purpose of the assessment is to support a student in having an optimal learning experience—including detecting potential problematic issues so that they may be dealt with proactively. Results of an assessment become part of the student’s program file.

Assessments that indicate probation, suspension, or dismissal include the Guide and the Program Director, a student representative appointed by MSW-SAW to share perspective on conduct/behavioral issues and also may include the Field Director and/or other Faculty (including Field Instructors) who may have insight on the issues of concern. A student will meet with their Guide and the Program Director (or Designee) within 10 business days of a determination of probation or suspension (to be scheduled by the Guide) to review the assessment and to a plan for resolution of the probation or suspension, and the student will prepare a written draft of a resolution for the Guide’s approval within 10 additional business days.

In the event of a dismissal determination, the student will meet with their Guide and Program Director to discuss the determination within 10 business days of the determination (to be scheduled by the Guide). Also, a student whose assessment results in probation, suspension or dismissal will be informed by e-mail and certified mail within 10 business days of the discussion of the determination.

A student who does not agree with a determination of probation, suspension, or dismissal may choose to follow the Grievances procedure outlined below.

Dismissal from the MSW Program.

Dismissal from the MSW Program is an act of great consequence that is carefully considered by a student's Guide, the Program Director and/or Field Director, and possibly other involved faculty. Dismissal from the MSW Program means that one is no longer an active student and is no longer able to register for any MSW courses.

Dismissal can result from two types of factors: inadequate grades and non-grade performance issues. Dismissal for inadequate grades reflects a student who has two or more non-passing grades in MSW courses and/or a student who has three or more C grades. Dismissal for non-grade performance issues follows a Student Performance Assessment and reflects a student (a) who has violated the academic and/or professional standards outlined in the WSU MSW Program Standards, Policies, and Procedures and (b) who has not adequately addressed the violation, has made repeated violations, and/or has made a substantial violation that the student's Guide and the Program (and/or Field) Director determine sufficient to immediately terminate the student's participation in the Program.

It is not possible to provide an exhaustive list of violations of academic and professional standards that may result in a student's probation, suspension, or dismissal from the program, a list of examples is provided below:

- Conduct that is at odds with the social work profession's values and code of ethics;
- Behavior that interferes with a student's functioning and/or risks the welfare of those to whom the student has responsibility (e.g., clients, co-workers, fellow students);
- Demonstration of behaviors or attitudes that are at odds with core social work values;
- Failure to disclose required information to the Program and/or its partners or providing them with misleading or inaccurate information;
- Failure to follow the Program's field policies and/or the practicum agency's policies and professional standards; or
- Failure to use sound judgment in work with clients and in regard to oneself. For instance, failure to seek professional help for physical or emotional problems which interfere with professional functioning.

A student will be invited to discuss the dismissal decision with the student's Guide and the Program Director (or designee) within 10 days of the decision being made. Within 10 days of that discussion or an additional 10 days if the discussion is waived, a summary note will be placed in the student's program file and the student will be notified of the decision by certified mail. A dismissed student retains the right to grieve the dismissal decision per the grievance procedures described in the Student Handbook.

One who has been dismissed from the program may petition the program faculty for readmission to the program after two calendar years have passed from the official, final date of their dismissal. If their petition is approved, the former student must demonstrate that the matters that led to dismissal have been successfully resolved, and that may involve retaking some previously completed courses.

Grade Appeals

The MSW Program follows WSU's policy and procedure for appealing a final course grade. The official procedure is available at <https://www.winona.edu/academic/media/grade%20appeal%20proc.pdf>.

Please note the first two steps of the process involve attempting to resolve the matter with the course instructor by the end of the first 10 days of the subsequent term (7-week block for our purposes). A student will be notified of the final outcome by e-mail and certified mail.

Grievance Procedure

The MSW program is dedicated to maintaining a learning and growth environment dedicated to collegiality and mutual support. Nonetheless, disputes may arise. Below is an outline of the procedures to be followed if a student has a complaint or grievance concerning a disciplinary status determination (i.e., probation, suspension, or dismissal); another issue related to student status or an Assessment of Student Performance; any other non-grade issue with faculty, staff or administration; or a program policy. Please note that this process parallels WSU's Student Grievance Policy.

1. The first step of this grievance process varies depending on whether the grieved issue involve (a) a disciplinary status determination (i.e., probation, suspension, or dismissal); (b) another issue related to student status or an Assessment of Student Performance; (c) any other non-grade issue with faculty, staff or administration; or (d) a program policy. (Note: Each variant of this step aligns with WSU's Student Grievance Procedure, Step I.)
 - a. When the grievance pertains to a disciplinary student status, the student is informed of their status in a meeting with their Guide and Program or Field Director. This meeting provides the student with an opportunity to ask questions and raise concerns about the status determination. If the student does not understand or accept the status determination, they may request a follow-up meeting within 10 business days with the same faculty. If the student understands and accepts the status determination after the first or second meetings of this step, a summary note will be placed in the student's program file.
 - b. When the grievance pertains to a non-disciplinary student status issue or to an Assessment of Student Performance, the student should attempt to resolve the issues informally with their guide and Program Director (or Field Director as appropriate).
 - c. When the grievance pertains to a non-grade issue with a member of Program faculty, staff or administration, the student is encouraged to meet directly with the person(s) involved in an attempt to resolve the issue on an informal basis. If resolved, a summary note will be placed in the student's program file. If the nature of the issue would impose a significant burden on the student if they were to meet directly with the person(s) involved, the student may request to bypass this step.
 - d. When the grievance pertains to a program policy matter, the student should proceed directly to Step 2.

2. If the issue remains unresolved after the informal meeting or if the issue pertains to program policy, the student should submit a written request for an MSW Program General Grievance, Step 2 Hearing. The document should contain a detailed description of the issue being grieved, including the student's suggestion for resolution, and it must be delivered to the MSW Program office within 10 business days of the Step 1 meeting. The MSW program's Grievance Committee will review the grievance request, and advise the faculty who will participate in this step's meeting (i.e., their Guide, person(s) directly involved, and the Program Director or the Field Director [if the issue involves field education]) in an(other) attempt to resolve the issue. This meeting should occur within 14 business days of receipt of the request for a Step 2 Hearing. If resolved, a summary note will be placed in the student's program file, and the student will be notified by certified mail. (Note: This step and the previous one combine to be the equivalent of WSU's Student Grievance Procedure, Step I.)
3. When a student has a complaint/grievance which remains unresolved after the either of the above steps, s/he shall file a written account of his/her grievance with the appropriate academic dean in cases where the dispute involves teaching faculty, or the appropriate supervisor in cases where the dispute involves other university employees. This notification shall contain a statement indicating the intention of the party to proceed with the grievance, and the relief requested. The academic dean, appropriate supervisor, or designee, shall respond in writing to the student(s) within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the written, signed notice of grievance. If resolved, a summary note will be placed in the student's program file, and the student will be notified by Certified Mail. (Note: This step aligns with WSU's Student Grievance Procedure, Step II.)
4. If the grievance is not resolved after the previous step, the student(s) may appeal to the vice president for that area. The vice president shall consider the appeal and make a decision. The vice president shall respond in writing to the student within Winona State University fourteen (14) days of receipt of the written, signed notice of appeal. The decision of the vice president is final and binding. A summary note will be placed in the student's program file, and the student will be notified by Certified Mail. (Note: This step aligns with WSU's Student Grievance Procedure, Step III.)

As noted above, the MSW program's Grievance Committee reviews all written grievance hearing requests presented to the program. This committee discusses the student's request and provides the faculty attending a Program Grievance Step 2 meeting with advice on how to resolve the grievance. The Grievance Committee always includes the Program Director, Field Director, the student's Faculty Guide, and, per the student's request, two MSW students from the MSW-SAW. It also may include other faculty with special insights about the issue being grieved (e.g., a faculty field liaison for field education-related issues).

Other Dispute Resolution Protocols

Not all disputes are resolved through the grievance and/or grade appeals processes. Below is a table that can help direct a student to the proper protocol to follow for resolving the most common student issues. Students are encouraged to contact their Guides or the Program Director for further assistance in dispute resolution.

Dispute Resolution Guide

| <i>Dispute Source</i> | Individual Faculty or Staff | Grade | Disciplinary Student Standing Status/Assessment of Student Performance | Fellow Student(s) | Field Placement Site (Supervisor or Other Staff) | MSW Program Policy |
|----------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| <i>Resolution Protocol</i> | Follow MSW Program Grievance Procedure. | Follow WSU Grade Appeal Process | Follow MSW Program Grievance Procedure | Attempt to informally resolve issue with fellow student(s) | Attempt to informally resolve issue with colleague at site. | Inform Program Director, Field Director, and/or Guide of concern. |
| | | | | Inform Guide and/or Program Director of issue. | Inform Field Director and Guide of Issue | Follow MSW Program Grievance Procedure. |
| | | | | Contact WSU Dean of Students and follow their protocol. | Follow Field Placement Site's Grievance Resolution Policy | |

Field Education

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has identified field education as the signature pedagogy for social work education. Field education is an integral component of Winona State University's MSW social work curriculum. It engages students in supervised social work practice and provides them with the opportunity to integrate knowledge and skills from the curriculum to the field setting. It is an opportunity for the developmental mastery of the requisite knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes needed for competent professional clinical social work practice. Winona State University's MSW program uses the CSWE's 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) for ensuring students demonstrate core and specialized competence upon the completion of MSW field placements.

The field education section of the student handbook outlines the structure, policies, and expectations of the Winona State University MSW field education program.

OVERVIEW OF WSU MSW FIELD EDUCATION

Winona State University's MSW field education component is grounded in the concept that practice based learning is the signature pedagogy of social work education. The field practice experience and agency Field Instructor are vital in the development of a professional social worker. The practicum is where the social work student learns how to exercise the combination of knowledge, skill, and values learned in the content courses; utilizes cognitive and affective processes to operationalize and demonstrate multidimensional proficiency in the core competencies; and is socialized into the profession. The overall quality of the Winona State MSW program is highly dependent on a strong field education component.

Winona State University's MSW field education program requires a minimum of 1000 hours of field education, so students have opportunities to demonstrate clinical social work practice skills, knowledge, values, and cognitive and affective processes in their field practica. Those students admitted in the regular standing program must complete a minimum of 1000 hours of supervised practice to graduate. Those students admitted in the advanced standing program must complete a minimum of 600 hours during their clinical field placements for graduation. The minimum number of hours for regular standing (1000 hours) and advanced standing students (600 hours) remains the same for those entering the MSW program part-time and those in employment-based placements.

The first two field courses in the MSW curriculum for regular standing students, Foundation Practicum/Seminar I/II (MSW 590/591) provide learning focused on generalist social work practice in an agency under the supervision of a licensed MSW Field Instructor. Students complete a minimum 400 practicum hours over two semesters, or an average 200 hours for each semester. Students in foundation practicum stay in the same placement setting through both semesters. Students complete an average of 12-15 hours each week in their foundation field

practicum. Foundation Practicum/Seminar I and II offer opportunities for students to develop generalist practice opportunities to demonstrate the nine social work competencies.

The last two field courses in the MSW curriculum for both regular and advanced standing students, Clinical Practicum/Seminar I/II (MSW 690/691) provide advanced learning focused on clinical social work practice in an agency, under the supervision of a licensed MSW Field Instructor. Students complete a minimum of 600 practicum hours over two semesters, or an average of 300 hours for each semester. Students in clinical practicum stay in the same placement setting through both semesters. Students complete an average of 18-20 hours each week in their clinical field practicum. Clinical Practicum/Seminar I and II offer opportunities for students to develop specialized trauma-informed clinical practice skills through mastery of the program's specialized competencies which extend and enhance the nine social work competencies.

Winona State University's MSW program recognizes the importance of connecting the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom with the students' field experiences through the online field seminars. The foundation and clinical field placements have associated field seminars that provide students opportunities to incorporate and apply generalist and clinical social work theories and concepts into their practicum placement experiences. The instructor of the practicum and seminar courses serve as the faculty field liaison between the field placement setting and the MSW program. The field seminars require MSW students to utilize critical thinking skills in the areas of self-awareness, relationships with others in social work practice settings, social work theories and their relationship to working effectively with diverse populations, and practice skills needed for competent social work practice. It also allows students to engage in clinical consultation with their peers through reflection upon events, experiences, and feelings pertaining to one's practicum; the process of analyzing best practices; exploring how social work concepts can help one work effectively; and ethical consultations. A final way the field program connects the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the classroom and field practicum is through the continuous sequence of professional development courses that is aimed at integrative professional development. Each semester a student is enrolled in the program they are enrolled in a professional development project course. An ongoing assignment in the professional development courses is a comprehensive professional development portfolio. The instructor of these courses is the faculty guide who assists with helping students integrate the knowledge and skills from coursework and field practicum experiences into their portfolios. This further supports the integration of content course theory, practice, policy, and research concepts into fieldwork.

FIELD EDUCATION ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of Winona State University's MSW Program to maintain a curriculum and field education program that prepares students for clinical social work practice that meets the accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education and aligns with the program's mission. The following section describes the criteria, roles, and responsibilities of the various field education participants.

Criteria and Responsibilities for Field Placement Settings

It is the policy of Winona State University's MSW Program that all practicum sites and agency field instructors are assessed for their ability to meet the criteria set forth in the MSW Student Handbook (<https://www.winona.edu/rochester/social-work/Media/MSW-Student-Handbook.pdf>) and by the Council on Social Work Education's criteria for field placements. In order to be accepted as a practice site, each setting must be able to meet the program's field setting requirements and must demonstrate the ability to provide educational experiences that complement and support curricular requirements in accordance with CSWE accreditation standards. The MSW Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator connects with potential field settings and instructors and is responsible for ensuring that continuing agencies meet program criteria.

A wide range of practicum sites offering a variety of settings, contexts, and diverse client groups provide students the ability to demonstrate the core and specialized competencies. When recruiting and approving field agencies for foundation and clinical practicums, the program ensures that agency sites can provide foundation and/or clinical social work practice opportunities. For the foundation year practice settings, the program requires that opportunities exist at the field placement for students to apply the generalist social work practice model of planned change. For the clinical year practice settings, the program requires that settings offer opportunities for students to build upon generalist skills to demonstrate specialized competency in the areas of engagement, assessment, intervention, and/or evaluation using evidence-based and best practice models. Field placement settings must utilize supervision and consultation and adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* to ensure their services are aligned with social work values and ethics. Out-of-state and international field placement settings must comply with the program's field practicum requirements and demonstrate the ability to provide competency-based educational experiences, in accordance with CSWE accreditation standards. The following criteria are used in the selection of field placement settings:

- Field settings must provide direct services to individuals, families, organizations, communities, and/or groups to improve quality of life and functioning.
- For the *foundation year* practice settings, it is required opportunities exist for students to apply the generalist social work practice model of planned change.
- For the *clinical year* practice settings, it is required settings offer opportunities for students to build upon generalist skills to demonstrate competence in the trauma-informed clinical areas of engagement, assessment, intervention, and/or evaluation using evidence-based and best practice models.
- Field settings should identify a licensed (unless included in a legal exemption category through the Board of Social Work in the state in which they are employed) MSW field instructor and/or task supervisor (if applicable). In some settings, students may have a *field instructor* who guides and provides the weekly MSW supervision and a *task supervisor* who oversees the student's daily activities but does not meet the criteria to be the MSW field instructor. The field instructor and task supervisor (if applicable) work

collaboratively in monitoring the Learning Contract and evaluation of the student's performance.

- Field settings or students can identify an off-site MSW social worker to fulfill the field instructor role if the field setting does not have an on-site MSW field instructor.
- Field settings must sign an affiliation agreement with Winona State University that outlines the responsibilities and liability of the agency, student, and University.

New field settings come to the attention of field staff through faculty, students, field instructors, professional networks, agency outreach, and referrals. Interested practice settings are requested to complete an electronic field site profile application using Tevera, WSU's online field management software program. The Field Director or Field Coordinator reviews the application and reaches out to the prospective agency for further information and to conduct initial screening. The Field Director or Field Coordinator connects with the prospective field setting either in-person, virtually face-to-face, and/or via Tevera and provides further information on the WSU field policies, procedures, and protocols and assesses the agency's ability to meet field criteria. All field agencies are required to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) or clinical contract reviewed by Winona State University's legal affairs office. The MOA outlines the responsibilities and liability of the agency, student, and University. Once a signed MOA by both parties is completed, then the practice setting can be approved in Tevera, and a student can be placed at the agency. The approved agency is then provided with access to Tevera, where they can receive student referrals for placement and update the site profile as needed. Field settings who have not met specified criteria above are notified and are not approved until the criteria are met.

Criteria and Responsibilities for Field Instructors

The following criteria must be met to be eligible to be a Field Instructor for the MSW program:

- Have an MSW or MSSW from a CSWE accredited social work program;
- At least 2 years of post-master's social work practice experience;
- Be licensed through the Board of Social Work in the state in which they are employed at the graduate level or above, unless they are included in a legal exemption category;
- Agree to provide a minimum of 4 hours a month of supervision either in-person, via phone, or virtually face-to-face;
- Agree to meet with student and WSU faculty liaison for site visits a minimum of once during each academic semester either in-person or virtually face-to-face; and
- Agree to complete documentations and evaluations in a timely manner.

Field Instructors are licensed professional social workers who guide and teach students how to apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in professional settings. Field Instructors agree to assume the primary responsibility, in consultation with their assigned faculty liaisons, for designing field learning opportunities for students to demonstrate program competencies. Field Instructors help students structure their learning opportunities to develop proficiency in the nine core or specialized competencies, expertise in social work practice, and assist in socializing students into the profession. They use supervision and consultation by

applying the *NASW Code of Ethics* and frameworks of ethical decision making to practice. They partner with students to develop the Learning Contract, identify generalist or clinical learning opportunities, provide feedback on activities, and assess student progress. Field Instructors working with students in their clinical placements agree to provide students with experiences and learning opportunities needed to develop clinical knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to demonstrate competence in trauma-informed clinical practice.

It is the policy of Winona State University's MSW program to have a field instructor and faculty field liaison monitor students' field placement experiences. Monitoring student performance in field is primarily the responsibility of the field instructor and the faculty field liaison. Field instructors and faculty field liaisons serve an important role in monitoring students through the supervisory process. Field instructors are required to provide supervision for a minimum of 4 hours a month while a student is placed with the agency. This supervisory time is intended to allow students the opportunity to discuss experiences, review the Learning Contract, receive feedback on field performance, and ask questions concerning professional and ethical issues. Field Instructors use the Learning Contract to monitor students, provide feedback on activities, and assess student progress towards social work competence. The Learning Contract is an ongoing, working document that is actively and consistently used and modified. Students document learning activities throughout their practicum as placement circumstances evolve. At the end of the practicum, the Learning Contract is used as an assessment and becomes the final evaluation of the students' performance in practicum.

Once a student is placed in a field setting with a Field Instructor, all new Field Instructors review online MSW Field Instructor orientation modules. With the orientation modules being online, it is available as an ongoing resource for all new and experienced Field Instructors. The purpose of the online orientation modules is to assist new and experienced Field Instructors in understanding and implementing the policies of the MSW practicum experience. The following topics are covered in the orientation modules:

- Overview of WSU's MSW program field education structure and processes;
- Roles and responsibilities of the Field Instructor, student, faculty field liaison, task supervisors, MSW field director, and MSW field coordinator;
- Requirements of Field Instructors, faculty field liaisons, and students for foundation and clinical placements;
- Overview of CSWE 2015 EPAS, specialized competencies, and associated dimensions;
- Learning Contract and evaluations;
- Identifying agency-based social work activities students can engage in to demonstrate competence in each of the social work competencies;
- Student orientation to the field setting;
- Usage of Tevera, the online field management program; and
- Responding to field issues and WSU's MSW field policies and procedures when concerns arise.

Field Instructors who complete the orientation modules are provided with access to Tevera to obtain field documents related to current policies, evaluations, and other resources containing pertinent information for MSW field instruction. In addition, the MSW field director, field coordinator, and faculty field liaisons are available to respond to Field Instructors' questions regarding any aspect of MSW field education. In addition to the online Field Instructor orientation modules, the MSW program offers online resources and modules for Field Instructors. The resources and modules provide additional learning opportunities for Field Instructors related to the 2015 EPAS, effective supervision skills, and evaluation using the Learning Contract. The resources utilize asynchronous material to allow as many Field Instructors to participate.

The MSW program also provides professional development labs each semester to MSW students and any interested Field Instructors. The professional development labs are opportunities for Field Instructors to earn CEUs on workshop topics of their choosing. The variety of workshops offered focus on current social work practice that is beneficial for practitioners. The participation of Field Instructors and agency staff at professional development labs is voluntary; however, it allows them to further support our students and enhance their own professional knowledge and skill development.

Responsibilities of the MSW Field Director

The MSW Field Director provides leadership in the ongoing oversight and implementation of the MSW field education program in accordance with CSWE accreditation standards. The MSW program Field Director directs all aspects of MSW field education and practicum experiences and works closely with the MSW Field Coordinator and MSW Program Director. It is the responsibility of the MSW field Director to:

- Provide administrative oversight of the MSW field program;
- Provide academic leadership for planning, implementation, and evaluation of the MSW field education program;
- Monitor and approve the field placement of MSW students;
- Identify, develop, monitor, and evaluate field education opportunities in collaboration with the MSW Field Coordinator and BSW Field Director;
- Oversee and coordinate Tevera field placement management software to streamline the student placement process, workflows, document delivery, communications, field instructor and agency databases, evaluation, data reporting, and CSWE accreditation standards compliance;
- Develop, implement, and revise the MSW Field Manual, field policies, and field procedures;
- Recruit, train, and oversee MSW faculty field liaisons;
- Engage in curriculum development, revision, and evaluation of MSW field education courses;
- Oversee and report on field education assessment data in accordance with CSWE accreditation standards;
- Write CSWE accreditation self-study documents related to field education and respond to CSWE Commission on Accreditation requests to maintain MSW program accreditation;

- Oversee resolution of student issues in field practicum;
- Facilitate communication among faculty, students, university administration, and external stakeholders to support field program planning, development, delivery, and evaluation;
- Participate in the establishment of field education goals and strategic plan for the MSW program;
- Facilitate and coordinate the MSW field advisory board;
- Collaborate with administration, faculty, students, and community, and professional leaders to promote field education, the MSW program, the department, the university, and the profession of social work;
- Guide and advise students on field-related matters; and
- Instruct field courses in the MSW program.

Responsibilities of the MSW Field Coordinator

The MSW Field Coordinator serves as part of the MSW field placement team and coordinates the MSW field placement process in accordance with CSWE accreditation standards. The MSW Field Coordinator works closely with the MSW Field Director in the delivery of the MSW field education program. It is the responsibility of the MSW Field Coordinator to:

- Recruit new field instructors and forging new partnerships with organizations to establish field placement sites;
- Strengthen existing relationships with field placement sites and field instructors;
- Facilitate on-going communication between MSW students, field instructors, faculty field liaisons, and the MSW program;
- Conduct field orientation modules prior to the start of the field practicum for MSW students;
- Guide and support MSW students during the field placement search process;
- Conduct online field orientation modules for agency field instructors;
- Educate and train field instructors and field placement agencies on the mission and goals of the program as well as the core competencies as established by CSWE;
- Assist the MSW Field Director in implementing, coordinating, and overseeing field placement management software to streamline the student placement process, workflows, document delivery, communications, field instructor and agency databases, evaluation, data reporting, and CSWE accreditation standards compliance;
- Work with the MSW Program's administrative assistant and the university's legal analyst on the development and maintenance of clinical contracts for placement sites;
- Monitor student progress and engaging in resolution of student issues in field practicum;
- Provide field instruction through individual and group supervision with MSW students placed in settings without qualified field instructors;
- Guide and advise students on field-related matters; and
- Instruct field courses in the MSW program.

Responsibilities of the WSU Faculty Field Liaison

Once a field setting is approved and students are placed, faculty field liaisons are the primary contact for field instructors and MSW field students. Faculty field liaisons bridge the gap between the MSW program and the practice setting through regular communication with the student and field instructor. The faculty field liaisons encourage, support, and provide information to agency field instructors and students to help connect evidence-informed models and practices to the field practice experience. It is the responsibility of the WSU faculty field liaison to:

- Serve as the instructor of the foundation and clinical practicum/seminar course to facilitate the integration of the MSW curriculum and practice arenas;
- Monitor student progress in field through online seminar discussions and assignments, consultation, reviewing student learning contracts, and agency site visits;
- Meet with students and the agency field instructors a minimum of once during the academic semester either in-person or virtually face-to-face;
- Make additional site visits to monitor and address concerns of placement with an agency or student as they are warranted;
- Assist students with the learning contract and ensure core and specialized practice competencies are accomplished in field practicum;
- Confirm students have opportunities in their field placements to engage in social work activities and self-reflection to ensure their practice is aligned with NASW ethical standards and best practice models;
- Connect academic and practice arenas by communicating with agency field instructors, completing site visits to the agencies, reviewing students' learning contracts, and providing information and identifying with field instructors social work activities;
- Communicate pertinent information or concerns to the MSW Field Director regarding students and/or placement settings; and
- Assign a final grade for MSW 590/591 or MSW 690/691, incorporating the final field evaluation completed by the field instructor and successful completion of seminar assignments.

Responsibilities of the Student

MSW students are expected to take an active role and assume initiative for their learning in the field. It is the responsibility of the MSW student to:

- Follow the MSW program's field process and procedures for finding a field setting and field instructor to secure a field placement approved by WSU;
- Complete the MSW practicum application, resume, and CastleBranch national criminal background check;
- Complete the MSW field orientation modules, contact settings of interest for placement, and attend a field interview(s) with potential field instructors;
- Abide by the NASW Code of Ethics;
- Maintain confidentiality at all times, including at the field setting, in online seminars, and within course assignments;
- Maintain self-care and emotional well-being to provide optimal service to clients;

- Establish and maintain professional relationships with the field instructor, placement setting staff, clients, and the faculty field liaison;
- Develop a learning contract that includes activities that demonstrate each of the core and specialized competencies;
- Adhere to the social work setting's work schedule, personnel practices, policies and procedures;
- Complete the required hours per week according to the schedule developed with the field instructor;
- Notify the field instructor as early as possible whenever unable to be present as scheduled;
- Submit all required forms and complete assignments for the practicum/seminar course by established deadlines;
- Participate in required site visits with the field instructor and faculty field liaison;
- Seek consultation and demonstrate willingness to accept supervision for continual growth;
- Actively participate and meet a minimum of four hours per month with the field instructor for supervision;
- Maintain ongoing communication with the faculty field liaison about any potential problems or concerns;
- Actively participate in the associated online field seminars; and
- Follow all Winona State University and the MSW program policies and procedures.

FIELD PLACEMENT PROCESS

It is the policy of Winona State University's MSW program to place students in a field setting that fits their professional interests, experience, and learning goals through a collaborative process. This process that requires consistent and timely communication between the student and the MSW Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator. It is the student's responsibility to find a field setting and field instructor; however, the MSW Field Director and/or MSW Field Coordinator will support the student and guide them throughout the process to secure a placement. The MSW program uses an online field management program, Tevera, to streamline the process of placing and monitoring students in field. The field placement process begins upon admittance to the MSW program for regular and advanced standing students.

To be eligible for field placement, students must be admitted in the WSU MSW program. In order to be admitted in the MSW program students must have a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 and a minimum undergraduate social work GPA of 3.4 for advanced-standing admissions. Upon admittance to the MSW program students are informed about the field placement process and criteria, which are detailed below.

Regular standing students complete online field orientation modules and an online foundation field application using Tevera upon admittance to the MSW program and complete the online clinical field application the semester before the start of their clinical field placement. Advanced

standing students complete online field orientation modules and an online clinical field application using Tevera during their first semester in the MSW program. To be eligible for clinical field placement (MSW 690/691) students must have successfully completed their foundation field placement (MSW 590/591) with a C or better or be admitted as an advanced standing student.

Only students who have met the field placement criteria are allowed to enroll in field courses and complete the MSW field orientation online modules. The field orientation provides students with an overview of the placement process, resources, and guidelines. All MSW students are required to go through the field orientation and field process to be eligible for placement. Students may explore field options; however, should not schedule agency interviews without completion of the field orientation and approval of the MSW field application. Not following the designated field process may place the student's status in the field placement process or the program in jeopardy.

Upon completion of the field orientation modules, MSW students complete the MSW Foundation/Clinical Field Application in Tevera. Regular standing students complete a MSW Field Application upon admittance to the MSW program before the start of their foundation field placement. Advanced standing students complete a MSW Field Application during their first semester in the MSW program. Along with the field application, students submit a resume and results of the CastleBranch national background study. The field applications are reviewed by the Field Director or Field Coordinator to guide the placement process and ensure the criteria have been met to start field placement. Only students who have met the field placement criteria are approved to enroll in practicum/seminar courses. The Field Director and/or Field Coordinator coordinates placements based on students' desires, professional and personal experience, and geographic location.

Upon approval of the foundation/clinical field application by the MSW Field Director or Field Coordinator, students identify agencies of interest for placement by researching agencies online, viewing site profiles in Tevera, accessing professional networks, and/or guidance from the MSW Field Director or Field Coordinator. Using the suggestions and guidelines provided during the field orientation, students contact agencies of interest to explore potential placements and schedule interviews. After the student is interviewed, if both parties agree that the placement is compatible, the student submits a placement recommendation form via Tevera to notify the MSW Field Director and Field Coordinator. The student also submits site representative and Field Instructor email addresses in Tevera to notify the site and Field Instructor to complete profile applications. After an interview, if a student is not accepted by a Field Instructor, students must seek additional site interviews with agencies of interest. Once the MSW Field Director or Field Coordinator is notified of the placement recommendation form in Tevera, the Field Director or Field Coordinator contacts the organization to answer questions, request the completion of forms, and finalize the placement. All field agencies are required to sign a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Winona State University. The MOA outlines the responsibilities and liability of the agency, student, and university. The ultimate determination of an approved field placement is made by the Field Director and/or Field Coordinator.

EVALUATION PROCESS

The Learning Contract and Evaluation of Student

It is the policy of Winona State University's MSW program to use the foundation and clinical Learning Contracts as the primary source for guiding student learning and evaluating student progress. The Learning Contract is a tool that is created to assess student progress in field practicum. It is structured around each of the nine core competencies, associated behaviors, and integrated dimensions. At the beginning of each foundation and clinical practicums, the student and agency field instructor use this tool to collaboratively identify agency-based activities the student can engage in to develop competencies in each of the CSWE nine core or specialized competency areas. It is a working document that is actively and consistently used and changed throughout practicum placements. During the field placement, the student, field instructor, and faculty field liaisons review the Learning Contract to assess student progress on the learning goals and ensure opportunities are provided to complete activities and develop professional competency.

The Learning Contract is a working document that is actively and consistently used and changed throughout practicum placements. It serves as a guide for both the agency Field Instructor and the student, and to assess and ensure the student develops competency in social work skills and ability to integrate theory and practice. Students may change learning activities under the competencies as placement circumstances evolve. The specific nature of the learning experiences varies with placements sites; however, the Learning Contract completed by each student in practicum identifies how competencies are demonstrated in the field setting.

MSW students are evaluated by their Field Instructor and complete a self-evaluation using the Learning Contract twice during each practicum experience. The first evaluation occurs near the end of the first semester when the student has completed half their hours (200 hours at the foundation level and 300 hours at the clinical level). The final evaluation occurs near the end of the second semester when the student has completed their required hours (400 hours at the foundation level and 600 hours at the clinical level). The foundation and clinical Learning Contract evaluation are completed by the Field Instructor online using Tevera. The evaluation consists of a Likert scale for each of the competencies. The rating scale shown below is used by the field instructor and student to assign numeric scores in assessment of overall competency.

4 - Exceeds Competency Expectations: Performance is above expectations for students at this level. Student demonstrates the integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice with expertise. The student is able to teach others. Student works autonomously and independently. Student demonstrates the ability to apply skills in complex situations and shows consistent growth and change.

3 Meets Competency Expectations: Performance meets expectations for students at this level. Student demonstrates the ability to independently apply skills in simple situations

and moderate growth and change. Student demonstrates ongoing progress and adequate performance. The student usually demonstrates integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills in practice with sufficient mastery.

2 - Partially Meets Competency Expectations: Performance shows signs of competency, but does not fully meet expectations for students at this level. Student demonstrates beginning level of skill development, but needs continued practice and supervision. The student inconsistently transfers knowledge and skills in practice, but continues to show improvement.

1 - Does Not Meet Competency Expectations: Performance is not meeting expectations for students at this level. Student demonstrates little knowledge or skill, limited evidence of growth or change, or rarely demonstrates progress. Student needs constant supervision or repeated guidance. The student is not able or rarely able to demonstrate integration of social work knowledge, values, and skills in practice.

A score must be present on each of the core or specialized competency areas, identifying the student's strengths and growth areas. It is expected that student learning will increase over the course of the practicum. The standard by which an MSW student is to be compared is that of a beginning level generalist or clinical social worker. The learning contract evaluations also contain a comment section for the field instructor to clarify or elaborate upon their scores. The field instructor also provides a recommendation if the student does or does not meet expectations, indicating if the student will be a competent generalist or clinical social worker. The field instructor and student sign the evaluation to attest having reviewed the evaluation jointly before it is submitted to the faculty liaison via Tevera.

At the agency site visits, the Field Instructor, student, and faculty field liaison review the Learning Contract and evaluation of the student's performance. At the first site visit, if any competency areas lack related activities for demonstration, the faculty field liaison works with the Field Instructor and student to identify agency-based social work activities the student can engage in to demonstrate competence during the second half of the practicum experience. The site visit is also an opportunity to review the evaluation and identify any competency areas the student is rated at or below "partially meets competency expectations". Special attention is warranted to these competency areas, and the Field Instructor, faculty liaison, and student develop a plan to help the student improve his or her performance in practicum.

Evaluation of Field Placement Setting

It is the policy of Winona State University's MSW program to evaluate field setting effectiveness through agency site visits and students' evaluation of practice settings. Field settings are required to adhere to the *NASW Code of Ethics* to ensure their services are congruent with social work values and ethics. The MSW program's evaluative process for field setting effectiveness is gauged through students' evaluation of practice settings and agency site visits.

The student evaluation of a practice setting is completed by each student at the end of their field placement and submitted using Qualtrics to the MSW program. The evaluation is intended to provide feedback to the MSW program regarding (a) the agency setting's overall suitability as a field site, (b) the assistance provided by all field personnel in the satisfaction of competencies, (c) the quality of field instruction, and (d) the agency's capacity to provide learning opportunities for the student to demonstrate competence. The students' assessments are based on their perceptions and experiences of the entire practicum experience. The data obtained through the students' evaluation of practice settings are an important source of information for the MSW Field Director and Field Coordinator to use in determining if a field site needs consultation and/or whether a continuing partnership should be maintained. The MSW program also uses the data for program evaluation and improvement.

Additionally, faculty field liaisons are required to meet with field placement settings either in-person or virtually face-to-face a minimum of once during the academic semester. During site visits, faculty liaisons assess field setting effectiveness at providing opportunities for students. Liaisons review the Learning Contract with Field Instructors and students and assist them in identifying agency-based social work activities the student can engage in to demonstrate competence in each of the social work competencies. Faculty liaisons encourage, support, and provide information to Field Instructors to assist with their setting effectiveness. If concerns arise regarding the agency's effectiveness, the faculty liaison should contact the MSW Field Director to discuss. Faculty field liaisons may make additional site visits to monitor and address concerns of placement with an agency as they are warranted. The MSW Field Director and/or Field Coordinator will work with the field setting to improve its effectiveness in providing adequate learning opportunities.

FIELD POLICIES

Field settings without an MSW Field Instructor

The field instructor is most often employed by the field setting where the student is placed; however, if the field setting does not have an MSW social worker who can serve as a field instructor and the practice site can offer students innovative practice opportunities, an off-site MSW social worker can fulfill the field instructor role. Off-site field instructors are required to meet the same criteria and have the same roles and responsibilities as an on-site field instructor. In this situation, students and field settings identify an off-site field instructor who provides the MSW supervision and an on-site task supervisor who provides the guidance and daily supervision of the student. The off-site field instructor and the on-site task supervisor work collaboratively in monitoring the Learning Contract and evaluation of the student's performance. The MSW field instructors are responsible for providing a minimum of 4 hours per month of supervision and completing the students' field evaluation. They are also the contact person for the faculty field liaison.

Winona State University's MSW program does not place students with field instructors who do not hold a CSWE-accredited social work degree or who do not have the required practice

experience. All field instructors (on-site and off-site) are licensed MSW social workers with a minimum of 2 years of social work practice experience. Situations may arise when a field instructor needs to end their role as a field instructor prior to a student completing their practicum. If so, the faculty liaison and/or MSW Field Director/Field Coordinator will work with the placement setting to identify a qualified (on-site or off-site) replacement field instructor to reinforce the social work perspective during the gap period, until a replacement field instructor begins providing field instruction for the student.

Continuing Dialog with Field Settings and Field Instructors

Beyond the initial contact with the MSW Field Director or Field Coordinator and field instructor orientation modules, ongoing dialogue occurs with field settings and field instructors. The MSW Field Director and/or Field Coordinator continues to maintain contact with new and established field settings through site visits, via Tevera, and regular communication to provide support and demonstrate appreciation for their efforts a minimum of every three years. During a student's placement, faculty field liaisons are the primary contact for field instructors and monitor student learning. They bridge the gap between the University and agency through regular communication with students and field instructors. Faculty field liaisons are required to meet with students and field instructors a minimum of once each academic semester. Faculty field liaisons and the MSW field director may make additional site visits to monitor and address concerns of placement with a field setting or student as they are warranted.

Ongoing communication with field settings and field instructors also occurs at structured activities and events of the MSW program, such as professional development labs and field advisory meetings. Professional development labs are offered to all field instructors and field setting staff and provide an opportunity for continuing dialogue. The Field Advisory Committee is comprised of field instructors, students, faculty field liaisons, and WSU MSW faculty. The field advisory committee meets a minimum of twice a year to discuss emerging issues and program developments related to field education. The field instructors who serve on the field advisory committee advise, recommend, and provide feedback to the WSU MSW field education program. The continuing dialogue with the field advisory committee members is an integral part of the MSW field education program.

Informal contact with field settings and field instructors also occurs, as the MSW Field Director, Field Coordinator, and faculty field liaisons participate on several field agency boards, committees, MSW advisory meetings, and through attending community events.

Employment-Based Practicum Placements

Winona State University's MSW program defines an employment-based field practicum as a placement in an organization that already employs the student on a full- or part-time basis and financially compensates the student in the form of a salary and/or benefits. Field settings and students may request an employment-based placement; however, specific policies and procedures described below must be met before a student is approved for an employment-based placement. Students in employment-based placements must complete the same number of hours and are assessed on the nine core and specialized competencies exactly as students in non-

employment field placements. In accordance with CSWE criteria, the MSW program does not accept equivalency or life experience work for MSW 590/591 or MSW 690/691 field courses.

The policies below exist to ensure the role of a student as a learner in employment-based field placement. The criteria for an employment-based placement are the same as a regular field placement except:

- The assigned field instructor must be different than the student's employment supervisor.
- The field setting must provide new and different social work learning opportunities from the student's current employment (such as a new population, division/department, treatment focus, or practice arena), unless it is a new position started within 2 months of the start of practicum in which case it can be a paid practicum due to the learner focused nature of new positions.
- The field setting must demonstrate that the student's current employment assignments are different from the proposed field placement assignments, unless it is a new position started within 2 months of the start of practicum in which case it can be a paid practicum due to the learner focused nature of new positions.
- The learning contract must be learner-focused and the emphasis of the field placement hours.
- Paid field placements are permitted, if the student role is defined as student learner during the field hours.

Below are the procedures if a student desires an employment-based practicum:

- If a student wants to explore a possible employment-based practicum, they must identify this on their foundation/clinical field application and be informed of the MSW program's policies and procedures regarding an employment-based field placement.
- If the proposed field setting meets the above criteria, the student can submit in Tevera (WSU's field management program) an Employment-Based Recommendation Form. The proposal must contain approval by the employment agency, clearly differentiate between practicum and employment assignments, specify a field instructor who is not the student's work supervisor, and demonstrate new learning opportunities for the student.
- The proposal must be submitted by stated deadlines in the MSW field calendar to allow sufficient time for the MSW Field Director or Field Coordinator to assess the viability and approve an employment-based practicum.
- If an employment-based practicum is approved, the faculty field liaison closely monitors the experience to ensure the student is defined as a learner and provided new learning opportunities to demonstrate social work competence separate from their employment responsibilities.

Student Safety

Winona State University's MSW program has several policies to support student safety in a field setting. The following policies ensure the MSW program supports student safety:

- It is a policy of the MSW program to require each field placement setting to provide agency safety training for students during their agency orientation.

- It is a policy of the MSW program to require student safety content in the student MSW field orientation and field instructor orientation modules.
- It is the policy of the MSW program that student safety is addressed in Foundation and Clinical Practicum/ Seminar I and II (MSW 590 and 591 & MSW 690 and 691) courses.
- It is the policy of Winona State University that the University purchases student professional liability insurance for MSW students throughout the duration of their field practicum.

The WSU MSW field education program supports student safety knowing the risk in providing services to clients can create potential hazards to professional social workers and students. Risk management and safety issues are relevant in all practice settings and client populations. Each field placement setting is required to provide agency safety training for students during their agency orientation. Winona State University purchases liability insurance on all MSW students prior to placement in a field agency. Students are covered by the University's professional liability insurance policy throughout the duration of their field practicum.

Student safety is discussed in the student MSW field orientation and field instructor orientation modules. The National Association of Social Workers provides guidelines for safety in the workplace, which provides the basis and content for the modules. Students, field instructors, and faculty liaisons are provided access to the NASW *Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace*

<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6OEdoMjcNC0%3D&portalid=0>.

In both the MSW student field orientation and field instructor modules, guidelines are provided to students and field instructors around University safety procedures. If a safety issue or concern arises in a field placement, students and/or field instructors are required to follow agency notification protocols and contact WSU's faculty liaison.

Student safety is also addressed in Foundation and Clinical Practicum/ Seminar I and II (MSW 590 and 591 & MSW 690 and 691). Course assignments and reviewing Learning Contracts require students and field instructors to discuss the critical importance of being aware of their surroundings, being intentional and instinctive, and using clinical safety practices with clients. Additionally, in both Foundation and Clinical Practicum/ Seminar I/II (MSW 590 and 591 & MSW 690 and 691), a two-week module is focused solely on the use of reflection, self-care plans, recognizing compassion fatigue, and addressing vicarious trauma which affects the social worker's wellness and safety. Supporting student safety is also done through promoting resources and access to healthcare and mental health services on campus and in the community.

Placement settings are required to provide students with agency policies, procedures, and guidelines regarding safety and risk management. Students and field instructors must document on the Learning Contract the placement setting safety training occurred. Placement settings are expected to uphold The National Association of Social Workers Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace

<https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6OEdoMjcNC0%3D&portalid=0> These NASW guidelines provide a standard to signify student safety in field settings. In order to maintain quality field settings where safety is a priority, the program obtains an evaluation of field settings completed by students. This evaluation is intended to provide feedback to the MSW program regarding the agency setting's overall suitability as a field site, which includes upholding safety in the learning environment a priority.

Hours

The first two field courses in the MSW curriculum for regular standing students, Foundation Practicum/Seminar I/II (MSW 590/591) provide learning focused on generalist social work practice in an agency under the supervision of a social work Field Instructor. Students complete a minimum of 400 practicum hours over 2 semesters, or an average of 200 hours for each semester. Students complete an average of 12-15 hours each week in their foundation field practicum

The last 2 field courses in the MSW curriculum for both regular and advanced standing students, Clinical Practicum/Seminar I/II (MSW 690/691) provide advanced learning focused on trauma-informed clinical social work practice in an agency, under the supervision of a social work Field Instructor. Students complete a minimum of 600 practicum hours over 2 semesters, or an average of 300 hours for each semester. Students complete an average of 18-20 hours each week in their clinical field practicum.

Students consult with their agency Field Instructors to develop a weekly schedule conducive to the agency setting, and that meets the minimum number of practicum hours each semester. This ensures students and Field Instructors agree regarding students' time commitment to their practicum. Hours are to be scheduled consistently across the 2 semesters of the practicum placement. Students are *allowed to begin their practicum hours 2 weeks prior to the start of the fall semester* and no earlier. Winona State University's professional liability insurance for MSW students begins 2 weeks prior to the start of the semester and continues throughout the duration of their field practicum. Students are *allowed to end their field practicum hours no earlier than 2 weeks prior to the end of the spring semester*.

Field instructors and students identify the breakdown of hours and learning activity tasks that would support the development and demonstration of the core or specialized competencies. Indirect contact and/or off-site practicum hours such as orientation, trainings, community meetings, staff meetings, etc. can be included as practicum hours if it relates to practicum responsibilities and the learning activities are demonstration opportunities documented on the learning contract. In addition, supervision time with the MSW field instructor is also to be included in total practicum hours. These activities and supervision time are opportunities to demonstrate the social work core or specialized competencies.

The required hours are tracked by students, Field Instructors, and faculty liaisons using timesheets in the online field management program Tevera. Students are required to make up any missed hours or days and work closely with their Field Instructor to meet the needs of the

agency. Should unforeseen circumstances arise for a student that interfere with completing the required hours in a semester the student, Field Instructor, and faculty liaison work closely with the MSW Field Director and/or Field Coordinator to identify a plan for completion of missed hours.

Enrollment in Concurrent MSW Courses

While in field practicum, students are required to be enrolled in concurrent MSW courses and maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA. If a student drops a concurrent course, they must also drop their field practicum and thus cease hours at the agency setting. Also, if a student earns a third C in MSW courses, they will be dismissed from the program (MSW Student Handbook <https://www.winona.edu/rochester/social-work/Media/MSW-Student-Handbook.pdf>), and therefore, will not be allowed to continue in their field placement and must cease hours at their practicum setting. To drop courses, students need the approval of their Faculty Guide. Faculty guides ensure that students maintain their academic eligibility for field placement and coordinate with the Field Director if a student becomes ineligible for admission or continuing at a placement. A GPA of 3.0 or higher in the WSU MSW Program is required for admission to field and continual enrollment in field courses (MSW Student Handbook <https://www.winona.edu/rochester/social-work/Media/MSW-Student-Handbook.pdf>).

Changes in Field Placement

Students are to remain at the same field placement setting over the 2 sequential semesters in order to maximize learning opportunities. The faculty field liaison will explore with the field instructor and student any concerns that arise regarding the setting to explore options and promote continuity of the placement. If, however, due to circumstances, a change in field placement is indicated, the faculty field liaison consults with the MSW Field Director and Field Coordinator. The MSW Field Director makes the final decision regarding changing field placements. If a change in field placement occurs, the number of hours necessary to successfully complete at the new placement setting will be determined by the MSW Field Director in consultation with faculty liaison and student.

Problem Resolution

If at any time during a field placement an MSW student has concerns with a Field Instructor, a field placement setting policy, another agency staff member, field practicum expectations or responsibilities, or any other significant concern, they should first address the concern with the Field Instructor in supervision. If the concern is not resolved, then the student should inform their faculty field liaison. The faculty field liaison can work with the student to strategize the nature of the issues and discuss possible solutions. The faculty field liaison offers support so the student can address the concern themselves or act as a mediator for the student if concerns continue.

If at any time during a practicum experience, a Field Instructor is concerned with a student's performance, they should document the observed behaviors and first address the concern with the student in supervision. If the student continues to perform below expectations, the field instructor should contact the faculty liaison to discuss the challenges. The faculty liaison will

work with the field instructor and/or schedule a site visit with the student to offer support and develop strategies to improve performance.

During the field placement, most problems can be resolved collaboratively with proactive intervention, open communication, problem-solving techniques, or other informal processes. Nonetheless, some situations require further attention following formal procedures. The MSW field education program follows the WSU MSW program's dispute resolution protocols and assessment of student performance procedures as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook. The MSW field education program also adheres to the WSU MSW program's student grievance policy and grade appeals policy as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook.

Termination of Placement by Field Setting

An early termination of the practicum by a placement setting may occur if concerns remain unresolved after prior remediation efforts. If this occurs, the field instructor is required to document carefully and consult with colleagues, WSU faculty liaison, MSW Field Director, and/or Field Coordinator. The documentation should include the student's Learning Contract evaluation and other relevant materials that substantiate the basis for the termination. The documentation also should give more than usual details on all factors, including assignments, supervision, presenting problems, student's response to feedback, etc. It should be written firmly and yet, still with compassion and respect for the student.

Termination may also occur if a student's behaviors have resulted in a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics, WSU student code of conduct, MSW program's professional standards and policies, field placement setting's policy, or state or federal laws. Termination from practicum automatically results in an assessment of student performance in order to make decisions about the student's continuance in field education and the MSW program. The assessment of student performance process for MSW students is outlined in the MSW Student Handbook.