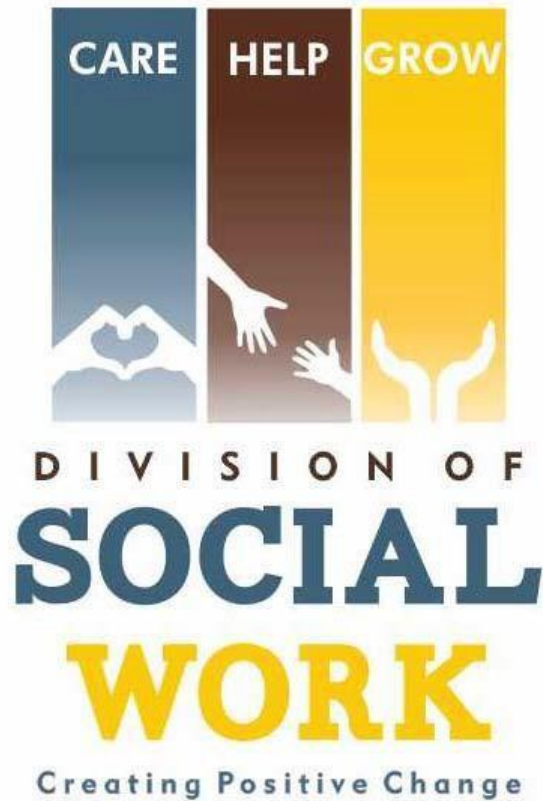




Master of Social Work Student Handbook 2026-2027

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Welcome to the University of Wyoming MSW Program!

Did you know the MSW degree is among the most sought-after degrees today? Part of that reason is the bright job market for social workers. Healthcare, mental health, addictions, hospice, child welfare, geriatrics, school social work, and veterans are among the areas where the demand for an MSW degree is high. But beyond work with individuals, groups, and families is an increasing and exciting need and future for MSW graduates who are interested in working at the policy and advocacy level.

As Director of the MSW Program, I want to welcome you to the University of Wyoming Division of Social Work. Now is a great time to get your MSW degree at UW.

The MSW Student Handbook is your roadmap to successfully navigating your path to getting an MSW degree. The curriculum and course of study for the MSW degree for both the Standard and Advanced Standing programs are included; and information on important policies and procedures is also included. Please carefully review the material contained in the handbook. You can also access information about the Division at www.uwyo.edu/socialwork.

In addition to this handbook, you will want to look at other published or posted materials: the [University Catalog](#), published annually by the University of Wyoming; the [Course Schedule](#), published each semester by the University (WyoWeb is the most up to date); and the [Graduate Student Resources](#). Reading these University publications provides you with information about the many opportunities across campus for support, as well as university policies relative to graduate school.

Speaking for our dedicated faculty and staff, I hope your experience in obtaining your MSW degree is a rewarding one.

Sincerely welcoming each of you,

Sandra Leotti, MSW, PhD

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Division Information

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Section I: The Social Work Profession

The social work profession has a long-standing commitment to working with vulnerable and oppressed populations and advocating for social, economic, political, and environmental justice. Social workers assist individuals, families, couples, groups, communities, organizations, and institutions, including governmental agencies, to plan and institute change, using an understanding of the multi-dimensional problem context within which all service professions and clients work and live in that affects the practitioner as well as the client. At the heart of social work is the professional/advocacy relationships that foster change as agreed upon by the social work professional and the client with an emphasis on the strengths and resources inherent in the various systems, including but not limited to, the client, the social worker, the agency, and the larger macro context. Social work seeks to enhance social, political, health, environmental, and economic justice for all.

The social work profession engages in advocacy focused on optimal wellbeing and for prevention and treatment of socio-political problems. Beginning practitioners in Wyoming, a rural and sparsely populated state, must:

- Internalize social work values and ethics,
- Develop a sense of professional self as an integrated social justice worker,
- Develop a variety of professional skills for rural practice,
- Expand the knowledge and theoretical bases appropriate for social justice work practice at all levels,
- Work to enhance the ability to locate and create resources needed either by a client or the social justice worker.
- Develop a deep and broad professional understanding of the multiple and conflicting systems in which we, as social justice workers, and our clients live and attempt to conduct the business of social justice practice.

Our social justice practice model is guided, but not limited, by our National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*. Our social justice education/practice, as defined by University of Wyoming, Division of Social Work, expands upon our NASW Code of Ethics and resurrects an older and much broader and more embracing notion of social justice practice as practiced by our predecessors, such as Jane Adams. Such sophisticated practice necessitates an ability to think conceptually at a systems level of understanding with the tenacity of spirit to advocate at multiple levels of practice within the problem context of the clients (including our own privilege and positionality as social workers) with whom we serve.

Career Opportunities for Social Workers

Career opportunities are available to social workers in a wide variety of state, federal and other public agencies, private non-profit organizations, and private for-profit organizations, including hospitals, mental health centers, hospice, schools, adolescent treatment facilities, childcare centers, nursing homes, substance abuse treatment centers, public assistance agencies, probation and parole offices, correctional centers, community action agencies, and research facilities.

Students may use the UW Career Center during their academic careers to help ready them for locating jobs in the state. Social workers are in demand every day. The Division of Social Work posts and emails job notifications that are sent to us so students can identify potential jobs after graduating.

Students can also visit the [NASW social work website](#) and the social work website, [Help Starts Here](#), which has many career options to explore.

National Association of Social Workers

Students may join social work's professional organization, [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#). Applications are available from the [Wyoming NASW](#). For additional information, contact the [NASW student representative or your regional representative](#). This information is accessible toll free through our state NASW office.

The National NASW office may be reached at 800-742-4089. Students receive discounted rates and the following benefits:

- Social Work: The Journal of the National Association of Social Workers.
- NASW News: reporting on issues of interest from NASW, state chapters of NASW, and on national and state political concerns.
- Professional liability, health, life and other types of insurance for social workers.
- Annual conferences at the state, regional, and national levels.
- Notification of workshops and meetings of interest to social workers.
- MSW students may in the Wyoming chapter of NASW. A representative to this chapter may be selected from current graduate students.

NASW Wyoming Chapter

The Wyoming NASW is a professional membership association committed to growing, developing, and supporting a strong social work presence while upholding and promoting social work standards, values, and ethics. In September or October each year, the Wyoming chapter of NASW holds its [Annual Program Conference](#). The Division of Social Work offers a limited number of student scholarships (funds allowing) for the annual conference.

Wyoming Mental Health Professions Licensing Board

Graduates of the Master of Social Work Program at the University of Wyoming are eligible to apply for licensure. For information about current requirements, [visit the Wyoming Mental Health Professions Licensing Board](#). For information on professional social work certification and licensing in all other states, students can contact:

Association of Social Work Boards
 400 South Ridge Parkway, Suite B
 Culpeper, VA 22701
 Phone: (800) 225-6880
 Fax: (540) 829-0562
<https://www.aswb.org/>
 Email: info@aswb.org

Section II: UW, College of Health Sciences, and Division of Social Work

University of Wyoming: The Land Grant Tradition

The University of Wyoming is the state's only provider of baccalaureate and graduate education, research, and outreach services. UW combines major university benefits and small-school advantages, with more than 180 programs of study, an outstanding faculty, and world-class research facilities all set against the idyllic backdrop of southeastern Wyoming's rugged mountains and high plains.

The early days of UW's operation during the late 19th century was to serve the sparsely populated Wyoming Territory with a focus on a liberal-arts curriculum; the university consisted of only a few buildings. Today, the university is defined by its connections, from local to international. The university has expanded to include a vibrant UW campus in Casper, WY, and Cooperative Extension Service centers in all 23 counties and on the Wind River Indian Reservation. Beginning in spring 2017, ZOOM technology was fully operationalized for video/web conferencing, allowing students to attend outreach classes from their homes.

Land Acknowledgement

In late spring, 2020, ASUW passed Senate Bill #2669 for a land acknowledgement to be read at their ASUW meetings. This acknowledgement was written to be inclusive and collaborative amongst Native Communities, Native Students, and UW Partners across campus. We, the Division of Social Work, honor and support this land acknowledgement and have included it below:

“We collectively acknowledge that the University of Wyoming occupies the ancestral and traditional lands of the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, and Shoshone Indigenous peoples along with other Native tribes who call the Great Basin and Rocky Mountain region home. We recognize, support, and advocate alongside Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and with those forcibly removed from their Homelands.”
ASUW Senate Bill #2669

University of Wyoming Mission Statement

The University of Wyoming is one of the nation's finest public land-grant research universities, dedicated to serving as a statewide resource for accessible and affordable higher education of the highest quality, rigorous scholarship, technology transfer, economic and community development, and responsible stewardship of our cultural, historical, and natural resources.

As Wyoming's only accredited university, we are committed to outreach and service that extend our human talent and technological capacity to serve the people in our communities, our state, the nation, and the world.

College of Health Sciences

The College of Health Sciences (CHS) is one of seven colleges at the University of Wyoming. CHS houses Division of Social Work, Division of Communications Disorders, Division of Kinesiology and Health, Division of Medical Education and Public Health, Fay Whitney School of Nursing, School of Pharmacy, and the Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND).

The Health Sciences advances health and well-being in Wyoming and beyond through excellence in education, research, clinical practice, and work within human service organizations and in community-based settings. We prepare practice-ready graduates to foster interdisciplinary collaboration, promote innovative solutions to rural health and social challenges, meet Wyoming's health care work force needs, and empower communities to achieve optimal health and well-being across the lifespan.

Division of Social Work

The Division of Social Work (DOSW) offers both Baccalaureate (BSW) and Master's (MSW) degrees in social work. The Division offers the BSW and MSW through both Casper (at University of Wyoming, Casper campus) and in Laramie (at the main campus).

MSW Program

The master of social work at UW is an advanced generalist degree program with a focus on rural practice. The graduate program curriculum allows you to acquire the theoretical and practical foundations of social work, along with advanced generalist competencies. Plus, your two-part practicum and capstone give you the chance to customize your M.S.W. program to focus on an area meaningful to you.

Our student-centric social work master's program offers two pathways to the MSW degree, both culminating in an MSW with a concentration in advanced generalist social work practice. The Standard program is designed for students who have an undergraduate degree other than a BSW, while the Advanced Standing Program is designed for those students with a BSW from a CSWE accredited program.

The MSW program consists of two options: a full-time option on the Laramie Campus, and a part-time option on the UW Casper Campus. The Standard Program is offered in both full and part-time options. The Advanced Standing Program is only offered as a full-time option.

The MSW program is a hybrid program consisting of face-to-face weekend classes, zoom video conferencing, and online coursework. The MSW program does not offer a fully online program. Both the BSW and MSW programs are accredited by the [Council on Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#) and are guided by the Council's [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#). The Division was reaffirmed by the CSWE in September 2019; reaffirmation occurs every 7 years.

Currently, an average of 70-100 undergraduates major in social work annually, with about 30-40 BSW graduates each year. The MSW student census is typically about 40-60 students across the state, with about 20-35 MSW graduates annually. Class size for MSW courses is typically 10-25. The Division has thirteen full-time faculty members including the Director, one full-time staff person, one part-time staff person in Casper, and part-time faculty/professionals who teach on a part-time, contract basis for the program. The Division maintains relations with human services organizations throughout the state, region, and nation.

MSW Program Mission Statement

Guided by the ethics, values, scholarly inquiry, and practice principles of the social work profession, the mission of the University of Wyoming's Division of Social Work is to educate and prepare students to become effective, ethical, and competent advanced generalist social workers in health care, educational, human service, and community-based settings, by providing quality learning opportunities for leadership in rural communities and developing skills transferable across various practice settings. Graduates are equipped to navigate complex challenges and to celebrate unity in differences across the state of Wyoming, as well as nationally and internationally.

MSW Admissions Process

The MSW admissions committee utilizes a holistic model in reviewing applications. Information for review is drawn from:

1. Official transcripts
2. Personal statement

3. Analytic essay
4. Professional references/recommendations
5. Resume

All applications are carefully reviewed in accordance with the Division's admission requirements and mission. Decisions are based on review of all application materials as they reflect the applicant's commitment to social work, social and economic justice, the values and ethics of the social work profession, and the applicant's potential as a graduate student, social work practitioner, colleague, and leader in the social work field. We also look for the intangible qualities that an applicant brings to the classroom and campus environment and to professional social work.

The College of Health Sciences now uses the external company Certiphi Screening to conduct background checks for students applying to professional programs in the college. For students applying to the BSW or MSW programs, applications are reviewed first, and **a background check is required only after an applicant has been provisionally accepted into the program.**

You **do not** need to complete a background check when you apply or while your application is under review. If you receive notification that you have been provisionally accepted into the MSW program, you will then receive step-by-step instructions from the Division of Social Work on how to complete the background check through Certiphi Screening. A successful background check is required to begin the program. The background check fee is \$79.

Evaluating Program Outcomes

The Division of Social Work has a planned approach to evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of our program. At the end of each course, students are asked to evaluate each course and the instruction delivery of the professor for each course. These evaluations are anonymous and reviewed by the Division Director and the faculty instructor after grades are posted. We also administer pre- and post-program assessments.

Section III: Curriculum, Generalist and Advanced Generalist Programs of Study

Curriculum

The Master of Social Work curriculum in both the Standard Program and Advanced Standing Program is based on the advanced generalist practice model. The MSW program assumes two levels of professional preparation - the generalist level and the advanced generalist level. Both levels of preparation include the study of nine curriculum areas, with the advanced generalist level being distinguished by increased complexity, depth, range of knowledge and skills, and integration of a social justice work model.

Generalist & Advanced Generalist: Perspective & Approach

The MSW program assumes two levels of professional preparation:

- Generalist: this level requires successful completion of an accredited BSW program and the summer bridge courses **OR** completion of the first year of the MSW program.
- Advanced generalist: this level requires successful completion of the second year of the MSW program.

Generalist Social Work Practice

Generalist practice is the focus of the first 34 credit hours of the MSW program. The generalist curriculum of the MSW program is built on a liberal arts perspective and provides a foundation for generalist social justice

work practice. It is informed by bio-psycho-socio-behavioral-spiritual and ecosystems knowledge; requires students to be theoretically and methodologically open and knowledgeable; involves strengths-based interventions at all system levels; focuses on practice in rural areas; and is research-based. The generalist social work practitioner is prepared for beginning level social work practice and for beginning advanced generalist study.

Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice

The concentration curriculum of the MSW program prepares students for advanced generalist social justice work, framed within an understanding of the multi-dimensional problem setting, both especially appropriate and relevant for social workers practicing in rural areas such as Wyoming. The advanced generalist concentration builds on the knowledge, values, and skills mastered at the generalist level. The advanced generalist curriculum requires that students have greater theoretical and methodological sophistication; increased ability in the selection and integration of practitioner roles; increased ability to integrate research into practice; a greater depth in the provision of services in and with larger systems, such as administration, supervision, policy analysis, and social planning; increased ability to analyze value and ethical dilemmas; increased ability to prevent and/or help solve difficulties in a wide range of diverse client systems with examination of the problem context that extends beyond the client's presenting issue; increased skill in providing leadership within organizations, the community, the profession, and in the broader environment; increased skill in interdisciplinary collaboration; and increased ability to address issues of social and economic justice, especially in rural communities.

Programs of Study

The MSW curriculum carefully sequenced to provide students the necessary information to proceed to the next level of coursework in accordance with CSWE standards. Students **must** successfully complete or be completing all required coursework at one level before being allowed to move to the more advanced level of coursework.

For example, all coursework from the generalist curriculum must be completed or in the process of being completed before a student may enroll in advanced generalist coursework. Students in the advanced standing program must successfully complete the summer bridge courses before enrolling in any advanced generalist courses.

Standard MSW Program

Students entering the Standard Program begin their studies in the summer semester. Their first 34 credit hours are directed towards mastery of foundation courses and practicum that help prepare students for entry into the Advanced Generalist concentration.

Advanced Standing Program

Advanced Standing Program students enter the MSW Program in the summer of their academic year. They complete bridge courses prepare them for their continued study within the Advanced Generalist sequence.

Section IV: Course Schedule, Course Delivery, Field, and Research Requirements

Course Schedule

The MSW program includes courses and experiences focusing on the integration of theoretical comprehension, knowledge acquisition, skill development, and critical thinking within the framework of social work values and ethics. The curriculum is designed to be integrative, providing depth across a range of areas, for advanced generalist practice proficiency. Elective courses and field practicum placements are used to provide additional emphasis in selected, advanced generalist areas.

Course Delivery

The graduate program operates as a hybrid model with a combination of face-to-face, zoom, and online coursework. For students attending full-time in Laramie, the face-to-face component consists of 5 intensive weekends per semester, except for summer courses which meet for 3 weekends. For students attending part-time in Casper, there are 3 intensive weekends per semester.

All students are expected to be present for weekend intensive classes. Faculty are heavily invested in the in-person contact as a key component of graduate education. Wyoming is a large state; the university is committed to providing quality education for students state-wide. Weather is, at times, a significant concern in getting to campus. The division is also committed to the safety and well-being of students. Consequently, students must be cognizant of possible weather conditions and make plans accordingly by arriving early if necessary, and/or planning to leave a day or so after the weekend classes. While the division recognizes the hardship that this may cause for some, expectations are that students act proactively to ensure their presence in class.

Only university excused absences ([UW Regulation 2-108 \(Student Attendance Policy\)](#)) will be accepted for the opportunity to make-up missed class time. It is the student's responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation regarding university excused absences by coordinating with the Dean of Students Office at dos@uwyo.edu or 307-766-3296. If a student has 6 hours of unexcused instructional time, the student will automatically receive one letter grade lower than their final grade when points are totaled at the end of the semester. If a student has 12 hours of missed instructional time, excused or otherwise, the student will automatically receive two letter grades lower than their final grade, and the student will not be able to pass the course.

Practice classes are held predominantly on intensive weekends. Some classes are held weekly via Zoom. Zoom allows students to join class from home, office, or anywhere else that is quiet and has a desktop, laptop, or mobile device and high-speed connectivity. Students may attend classes held via Zoom from home.

Expectations for Zoom classtime:

- Just as in a classroom, be prepared and engaged.
- Students are to be “live” in zoom classes with their cameras on.
- Maintain appearance just you would in face-to-face classes.
- Have a webcam and microphone and be conscientious about a clear video image and good audio quality.
- Join the zoom class on time.
- Mute the microphone when not speaking.
- Find a quiet place, without distractions, from which to attend. Use headphones if other people are present.

Use of AI Technology

The MSW program affirms academic integrity while acknowledging that AI tools are a growing part of our world. The MSW program approaches AI with curiosity and caution. We encourage students to do the same. Students are expected to develop awareness of the pitfalls and limitations of AI as well as its impact on learning.

Effective social work practice is built on critical thinking, ethical reasoning, communication skills, and self-reflection. These outcomes cannot be offloaded to AI without undermining your learning and growth as a practitioner. For these reasons, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the MSW program is subject to the following guidelines:

The use of AI in any given course is determined by the instructor. These decisions are informed by the instructor's expertise, the learning goals of the course, and the design of assignments. While course-level policies on the use of artificial intelligence may vary, learning and academic integrity remain at the heart of our program's values.

Students should expect that assignments are intentionally designed to reflect their own thinking, experience, and professional development, and that instructors are equipped to identify when that is not the case, even if the instructor does not outright ban AI. If you are unsure whether a particular tool or feature is appropriate, consult your instructor before using it.

There are two broad types of AI tools:

1. **Assistive AI tools** provide writing support such as grammar, spelling, and style suggestions (e.g., Grammarly, spell check in Gmail). The MSW Program encourages the use of assistive AI tools such as spell checkers, grammar checkers, and accessibility aids to support student success.
2. **Generative AI tools** create or rewrite content, offer ideas, or generate responses for you (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, and certain paid features in Grammarly or Google Docs). The use of these tools is subject to each course's policy on generative AI use. Assume that use is NOT permitted unless otherwise stated in a course syllabus.

Students should also be aware that generative AI tools carry significant risks and limitations that are especially relevant in social work education. Examples include but are not limited to:

- They reflect and can reproduce racial, cultural, and socioeconomic biases
- They cannot access your fieldwork, your client relationships, or your positionality
- Open AI platforms do not protect confidentiality. Entering personal information about client systems that you are working with is a violation of confidentiality.
- They often present information confidently, even when it is inaccurate, outdated, unwise, or otherwise inappropriate. This leads to unethical social work practice.
- They will often affirm and validate you, even when you are wrong or need to be challenged.
- They cannot replace the ethical reasoning you are here to develop.
- They can summarize the main points of resources, but those summaries can be inaccurate or incomplete, so you still need to know the material yourself.
- They require human oversight. You cannot simply trust what it produces, which means there is no shortcut around actually learning the content.
- When accurate, they can describe and summarize well, but stop short of synthesizing and critically analyzing information and resources – all of which are expected of graduate-level work.

- Environmental justice is part of social workers' role in social justice. AI data centers use massive amounts of energy and water.
- They cannot care about real people in the real world. But you can.

Even if your instructor allows the use of generative AI, disclosure regarding how and where you used them is best practice. This helps your instructor support your learning process and provide guidance on how to engage with these tools thoughtfully and ethically.

Using generative AI tools in violation of a course policy will be considered academic misconduct/dishonesty and will be subject to the procedures outlined [UW Regulation 2-114](#).

MSW Field Practicum

According to the 2022 CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, field education is the signature pedagogy of social work education as it “represents the central form of instruction and learning in which a profession socializes its students to perform the role of practitioner.”

Full-Time Option: There are no summer field hours. For students admitted to the Standard MSW program, the hours are completed over the course of two distinct field experiences; one for 400 hours in the first (generalist) year and another for 500 hours in the second (advanced generalist) year. For Advanced Standing MSW students (those with a BSW), an advanced year placement of 500 hours is completed.

The foundation level practicum is 400 hours taken concurrently during Fall/Spring semesters of the student’s first year of study with other foundation course work. Students are typically in their field placement site from Oct 1 to April 30, for 16 – 18 hours per week.

The advanced generalist practicum is a 500-hour practicum taken concurrently during Fall/Spring semesters of the student’s advanced year of study. Students are typically in their field placement site from Sept. 5 - April 30, for 16 – 18 hours per week.

Part-Time Option: There are no summer field hours. For students admitted to the Standard MSW program the hours are completed over the course of two distinct field experiences; one for 400 hours in the second (generalist) year and another for 500 hours in the third (advanced generalist) year. Standard students complete 200 hours in fall and spring of the second year, and 250 hours fall and spring of third year. Students are typically in their field placement site from the first week of classes in late August until the end of the Spring semester, for approximately 15-18 hours per week.

Eligibility to Enter Field

To begin the field placement process, students must complete and submit the field placement application and must have either completed or be concurrently enrolled in all prerequisite courses. Access to the Field Placement Application is available only through Tevera, a software available to students for field work once they are enrolled.

Prerequisites for the Foundation Practicum include:

- Current admission to the MSW Program
- 3.0 GPA
- Completed or concurrently enrolled in foundation year coursework.

Prerequisites for the Advanced Generalist Practicum include:

- Admission to the MSW Program
- 3.0 GPA
- Successful completion of all Foundation coursework, including the summer bridge courses.

If a student earns an incomplete or an unsatisfactory grade in any coursework, the student is unable to move forward with a field practicum placement.

Field Placements

To facilitate a productive learning experience for all field practicum students, many variables must be considered in determining a student's field practicum. The Director of Field Education is responsible for maintaining an

array of field practicum sites; students work directly with the Field Director in coordination of the placement process. Students are given the opportunity to state their preferences as to learning activities, geographic location, and type of agency in which they would like to be placed. **The Division, however, is ultimately responsible for determining where a student is placed for field practicum.** More details regarding the process of placement and the field practicum expectations are provided in the Field Handbook.

Field Practicum Grading

Because of the unique nature of the field practicum experience, the conventional letter grade system of evaluation is ill-suited for this course. Therefore, students are evaluated in the field practicum course using an "S/U" grading system. A student who earns a grade of unsatisfactory (U) in a foundation level field practicum (SOWK 5450 or 5460) or in advanced generalist field practicum (SOWK 5850) will require review by the MSW Committee to determine whether the student will be allowed to continue in the program. The student may be required to develop a Student Success plan and/or may be dismissed from the program.

Field Seminar Courses

As a part of the Field education sequence, students must be concurrently enrolled in the appropriate Field Seminar course. These courses are designed as the field seminar course in which students are further evaluated in their abilities to demonstrate competency in the 9 Core Competencies and associated practice behaviors required by CSWE and the Division of Social Work (Appendix B). The Field Seminar courses are traditional grading (A-F). Students must receive a passing grade in any Field Seminar course to continue in their field placement. Additional policies and procedures related to field practicum expectations and process can be found in the MSW Field Practicum Handbook located on the UW Division of Social Work website.

MSW Capstone Project: Thesis (thesis: SOWK 5960) or Portfolio (SOWK 5755)

All MSW students must successfully complete a capstone project with written and oral components. The Thesis is a 2-credit course per semester for the fall and spring semesters of the advanced year that consists of the development of original research. The Portfolio is a 1-credit per semester course for the fall and spring semesters of the advanced year. The portfolio is a considered and intentional collection of student learning, demonstrating mastery of 9 competencies that contribute to an integrated advanced generalist social work practitioner grounded in social justice work. Students register for capstone projects under two course options: SOWK 5960 Thesis Research or SOWK 5755 Portfolio.

Thesis. The thesis is original independent research. A thesis requires formation of a thesis committee consisting of three committee members, two in the division (one chair) and one tenured faculty member outside DOSW from the larger university; a proposal defense; an IRB proposal/submission/approval; and a final defense in the spring.

There is no class time associated with the thesis. Be mindful that a thesis is very time-consuming; it is not unusual for thesis students to take additional time beyond their anticipated course work to complete their study.

All thesis students must complete a final exam/defense at least 10 days prior to the final completion date established by the University each semester. The final exam will be an oral defense of the Thesis with the student's thesis committee. The student's thesis must comply with [university regulations](#). The student must arrange with their committee for the defense, and the student is responsible for reserving a room through the administrative assistant for the defense. Students are welcomed to invite family and/or friends for the defense. The committee may also choose to discuss the portfolio further without guests.

There are several forms that must be completed, signed, and submitted to DOSW and Registrar's Office as part of the Thesis requirements: Committee Assignment Form, Research Proposal Approval, and Report of Final Examination Results. Those forms can be found on the MSW website: [Thesis Forms](#)

Portfolio. The portfolio documents one's growth as a professional social worker. Students write a narrative of their development and utilize core course assignments as well as select products from other course work and the practicum experience to address ways in which they have mastered CSWE/DOSW competencies. For the portfolio option, students choose a chair and another committee member from inside the Division. The portfolio option also includes a 2-hour class on that meets on Fridays of intensive weekends with a final presentation in the spring. If a student chooses a portfolio as their capstone course, the student must successfully complete the fall semester of the Portfolio in order to move forward into the spring semester and the final courses.

Two faculty members from the Division of Social Work serve as the portfolio committee: one as the chair of the committee (typically, but not exclusively, tenured and tenure-track faculty) and the other as the inside member (any full-time faculty member within the division).

Committee Chair: The role of committee Chair is to serve in primary direction of the student's portfolio project. The Chair should be the primary resource for the student and will oversee the design and progress of the portfolio. The chair's primary function is to ensure that the portfolio is congruent with the goals and objectives of the MSW program, addresses core and program specific social work competencies, and fits with the career goals articulated by the student. The Chair oversees the final presentation and the required classroom component of the portfolio project. The chair also serves as the student's faculty advisor.

Therefore, the Chair must see that all steps of the student's graduate program proceed in a timely fashion.

Inside Members: In addition to the Chair, one other committee member from the DOW must be included. The primary role of the inside committee member is to provide academic and creative support to the student. The inside committee member will read the students portfolio, attend the final presentation, and provide helpful and supportive feedback as necessary.

Students who elect the Portfolio project as their capstone course must complete a final presentation prior to the last day of spring classes. The student must arrange with the chair and inside committee member for the meeting, and the student is responsible for reserving a room through the administrative assistant for the presentation. Students are welcomed to invite family and/or friends for the presentation. The chair and inside committee member may also choose to discuss the portfolio further without guests.

Following the final presentation, the committee will engage in a collaborative discussion to reach a decision on the student's performance. In cases where there are concerns about a student's readiness to pass, the committee will work together to identify areas for improvement and may recommend additional steps or revisions before granting final approval.

Termination from the Program due to Lack of Completion of Capstone Project at 6th year

The "graduate clock" is what finally indicates when a student must finish the capstone project or be dismissed from the University and the graduate social work program. The University of Wyoming has policies regarding petition under exceptional circumstances for extension of time, and this information can be found at: (See "Six Year RulePetition"). Be mindful that completion of the "six-year rule petition" does not ensure acceptance of prior courses that are six years old or older. The "petition" will be reviewed by the MSW Committee as to relevance of past courses to today's social work practice field.

Section V: Concentrations and Post-MSW Certificate Program

School Social Work

School Social Work Graduate Concentration (for current MSW students)

The Division of Social Work provides an opportunity for MSW students in the Advanced Year of the program to obtain education meeting the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board requirements for a school social work license. For more information about this opportunity, please refer to the information at the following link: https://www.uwyo.edu/socialwork/_files/docs/sowk-graduate-concentration.pdf

School Social Work Post-MSW Preparatory Certificate (for those who already have an MSW)

For those who have already obtained an MSW but haven't met the Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board requirements for a school social work license, the Division of Social Work offers an opportunity to obtain the education needed to meet those requirements. For more information about this opportunity, please refer to the information at the following link: https://www.uwyo.edu/socialwork/_files/docs/sowk-graduate-preparatory.pdf

Section VI: Advising, Graduate & Transfer Credits

Advising for Graduate Social Work Students

Communication and information are necessary for successful progress towards earning the MSW. This is accomplished through student orientations, student representation on Division of Social Work Committees, and the advisement process. Student orientation/advisements are scheduled throughout the MSW program to facilitate smooth progress from semester to semester, from foundation content to advanced generalist content, and from coursework to field practicum. Attendance at student orientations is required.

Advisors are responsible for academic and career advising, monitoring a student's progress in the program, and problem solving. Advisors are available throughout the semester as the need arises for consultation. The Director of the MSW Program serves as the advisor for all new incoming students until their capstone begins. The MSW Part-Time Program Coordinator serves as the advisor for all part-time students.

At the start of the Advanced Generalist year, students are required to select a faculty member to serve as Chair of their Graduate Committee (Thesis or Portfolio). The Chair of the student's committee is responsible for providing guidance and advising throughout the Advanced Generalist portion of the MSW program.

Graduate Credits and Transfer of Credits

Academic credit for life experience or previous work experience in whole and in part in lieu of the field practicum or of courses is not allowed, as specified in the Curriculum Policy Statement of The Council on Social Work Education. Students who have completed graduate social work courses at another institution that is accredited by CSWE may be allowed to transfer up to nine credits, providing:

- The course is demonstrated to be a graduate level course.
- A student has earned a grade of B or better in the course.
- The courses were taken within the past six years.
- The MSW Program Director approves the credits.

Section VII: Student Resources

Library Support for Graduate Students

Graduate students are very fortunate to have committed library assistants at the UW Coe Library who strive to serve as a student advisor/resource person to help with research and reading assignments. Resource librarians can be reached at the Coe Library or via email: [Coe Library](#).

Student Financial Support

Students may apply for scholarships, Graduate Assistantships, and student success funds within the Division and across campus, as they are available. In addition, the College of Health Sciences and/or other programs throughout the university may provide funding for assistantships. The responsibilities of a graduate assistantship, its funding level, and who is eligible vary depending on the expectations of a funding source. Specific information will be given to each student selected for a graduate assistantship. Students are selected based on the expectations of the funding source, financial need, academic success, and full-time graduate student status. Other funding is available through Student Financial Aid. See University of Wyoming Office of Student Financial Aid at <http://www.uwyo.edu/sfa/>.

UW Resources

Advising/Career/Exploratory Studies Center (ACES)	307-766-2398
Campus Recreation	307-766-5586
Coe Library	307-766-3190
Dean of Students	307-766-1121
Disability Services	307-766-3073
Financial Aid Office	307-766-2116
Information Technology (IT Help Desk)	307-766-4357
Poke Center for Community Resources	307-766-6463
Residential Life and Dining Services	307-766-3613
Wyoming Department of Transportation (WyDOT)	307-777-4375
Student Health Service	307-766-2130
Student Organizations/Campus Activities Center	307-766-6340
University Counseling Center	307-766-2187
University Libraries	307-766-3190
University Store	307-766-3264
Wellness Center	307-766-9355
Writing Center	307-766-5250
WyoOne ID Card Office	307-766-5268

Student Social Work Graduate Associations

Student Organizations and Student Representatives

Representation on Division Committees provides an excellent opportunity for students to impact education policy and stay informed of student issues. MSW students may volunteer and/or be asked to represent the Division of Social Work on:

- Faculty Search Committees
- MSW Committee
- College of Health Sciences Research Committee
- Student Recruitment and Retention
- College of Health Sciences Student Appeals Committee

AMSW²

The Council on Social Work Education requires the Division of Social Work to have a recognized and active student organization to maintain accreditation. The Associated MSW Students of Wyoming (AMSW²) became an officially recognized student organization by ASUW in 1998. MSW students are urged to join to connect, support, and be supported by other master's students.

Miscellaneous Resources

- [Division of Social Work Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Division of Social Work \(SOWK\) Course Descriptions](#)
- [Graduate Student Resources](#)
- [Graduate Student Policies](#)
- [International Federation of Social Workers Ethical Principles](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#)
- [Social Welfare Action Alliance](#)
- [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

Section VIII: Policies

University of Wyoming Policies

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is expected. Academic dishonesty, such as cheating and plagiarism, will not be tolerated; the provisions of [UW Regulation 2-114](#) apply.

Appeals Process

The University of Wyoming, as a fully accredited public institution of higher education, must comply with general laws, regulations, and principles of fairness, uniformity, and accountability. Exceptions to uniform application of general regulations are justified only in extraordinary circumstances when necessary to prevent or remedy an unfair or unjust consequence. Exceptions to regulations may be petitioned by submitting the appropriate form to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. If any of the signers recommend that the petition be denied, the registrar may deny the exception, make further inquiries, or refer the matter to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for direction. If all the signers recommend that the exception be granted, the registrar may concur (and process the exception) or may deny the exception and refer the matter to the Vice President for Academic Affairs for direction. If the registrar denies the petition, the student may elect to pursue the petition with the Vice President of Academic Affairs. For more detailed information, please refer to the Petitions and Appeals heading of [Graduate Student Regulations and Policies](#).

Continuous Enrollment

Students must remain continuously enrolled throughout their degree program. Reactivation is required if a student's enrollment lapses beyond 12 months.

Discrimination and Harassment

As articulated in [UW Regulation 4-2](#), the University does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, religion, color, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, creed, ancestry, political belief, or any other applicable protected class or participation in any protected activity. The University will not tolerate acts of discrimination or harassment based upon Protected Classes or related retaliation against or by any employee or student. Individuals who violate this Regulation shall be subject to corrective action and/or discipline, up to and including termination or separation from the University.

Title IX and Sexual Misconduct

[UW Regulation 4-3](#) on sexual misconduct applies to all faculty, staff, students, contractors, and visitors of the University. The University prohibits sexual misconduct in any form, including dating violence, domestic violence, hostile environment sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, stalking, and any other conduct of a sexual nature that is nonconsensual. The Sexual Misconduct Policies and Procedures Document for Faculty, Staff, and Students sets forth resources available to University community members, describes prohibited conduct, and establishes procedures for responding to incidents of sexual misconduct.

Academic Freedom

[UW Regulation 2-15](#) on Academic Freedom states, "Academic freedom in teaching protects the rights of Academic Personnel to teach according to their expertise. Academic Personnel are entitled to freedom in discussing their subject. Academic Personnel have a responsibility to ensure that their teaching is effective and consistent with the standards of the discipline, understanding that disciplines may have diverse points of view

on any given subject. Teaching may involve controversial material; however, with academic freedom in the classroom, Academic Personnel also have the responsibility to respect others' freedom to express disagreement and alternate opinions." Additionally, "Academic freedom does not negate the rights of students and the public to disagree with Academic Personnel's work, although students are expected to learn material with which they may disagree." Also adopted by UW in its Academic Freedom policy, "Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled."

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

College of Health Sciences Policies

[CHS Student Academic Appeals Guidelines](#)

Division of Social Work Policies

MSW Scholastic Requirements

University and College of Health Sciences policies governing scholastic requirements, including major changes, probation, and dismissal, apply to students enrolled in the MSW program.

In addition to university/college requirements, the MSW program has the following scholastic requirements:

- Students must maintain at minimum a GPA of 3.0.
- Students must pass all core MSW courses with a "B" or better.
- Students must pass elective courses with a "C" or better.
- Students must complete field courses/seminar with an "S" or satisfactory grade.

Failure to meet these scholastic requirements in a prerequisite course prohibits students from continuing with later sequenced courses. However, students may continue to take courses that do not require the prerequisite course that did not meet scholastic requirements.

Upon not meeting the scholastic requirements for a course, the student must write a letter to the MSW Committee and given to the MSW Director that contains the following:

- Confirmation that the student has met with the instructor of the course for which they did not meet the scholastic requirements.
- A plan for what the student needs to do to successfully meet expectations and complete the course and the program.
- A plan to meet with the MSW Director to talk about any questions the student has and ensure that everyone is on the same page. When scheduling this meeting, the MSW Director should take into account that the meeting should occur after the MSW committee has met regarding the letter.

Once the student has submitted the letter to the MSW Director, the MSW committee will review the letter and the MSW Director will negotiate what happens next.

If a student decides to exit the program during this process, an interview with the Director of the Division of Social Work is an important part of the exit process. The interview is intended for the Director to understand from the student's perspective what led to the situation that resulted in their desire to exit the program.

Student Academic and Professional Performance Review Policy

One of the most important considerations in successfully completing the degree requirements in the Division of Social Work (DOSW) is for students to perform at the appropriate level academically and professionally. While this is the case for most Division of Social Work students, there are occasions where there may be faculty concerns about a student's academic and/or professional performance. The purpose of this policy is to provide students with feedback and direction for successful completion of course(s) or the program.

Listed below are representative areas of academic and/or professional performance by students that should trigger a concern, although other areas could as well.

- Student performance in the field practicum is unsatisfactory.
- Student is dismissed from field practicum.
- Student performance in a didactic course is unsatisfactory or failing.
- Student exhibits a pattern of behavior that is judged to hinder the student's development as a professional. Behaviors prescribed in DOSW course syllabi, the University of Wyoming Student Code of conduct, and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics will be used by faculty as a guide.
- Matters of academic dishonesty must follow the procedures documented in [UW Regulation 2-114](#).

Procedure

- The student will receive feedback concerning the academic, professional performance or field concerns from the faculty at the time of the occurrence.
- Following this, concerns raised by a faculty member shall be directed to the appropriate program director (BSW, MSW, Field).
- In consultation with the Program Director and/or Field Director, the course faculty member will develop a Student Success Plan with the student, specifying an action plan with a timeframe and potential outcomes of the situation (See Templates in Appendix A and B).
- The faculty (and others as appropriate) will discuss the plan with the student. The student, and others as appropriate, including faculty member, faculty advisor or faculty liaison, program director, and field director will sign the appropriate Student Success Plan, which will be placed in the student's DOSW record.
- Failure to adhere to the Student Success Plan may result in failure of the course or dismissal from the program.
- A follow-up conference(s) to review the student's progress will occur according to the timeline outlined in the Student Success Plan. Documentation will be attached to the original Student Success Plan.

APPROVED BY DOSW ADMIN TEAM ON July 7, 2017

Grievance Procedures and Appeals Processes

Any student or student group may use the Division of Social Work procedures for resolution of student disputes arising from decisions or actions of Division faculty, staff, or administrative officials. The only grounds for appeal shall be allegations of prejudice towards the appellant; capricious evaluation; or capricious treatment (refer to the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and [UW Regulation 11-1](#)).

Appeals must be completed within the time frames specified.

Students should first attempt to resolve the issue informally with the person involved. When the issue relates to an action regarding a class, the student should meet with the instructor of the involved course first.

If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of the informal resolution, an appeal can be made to the Division of Social Work (DOSW) and will proceed pursuant to the process outlined below. The written appeal should be forwarded to the DOSW Student Affairs Committee via the DOSW administrative offices. The appeal must be presented to the Director of DOSW or designee no later than fifteen (15) school days after the act complained of has occurred. If the act complained of occurred between academic terms, the student shall file the complaint no later than fifteen (15) school days after the beginning of the next academic term. A written appeal shall consist of a letter to the Student Affairs Committee presenting the action being appealed, the basis of the appeal, and any supporting documents.

The Chair of the DOSW Student Affairs Committee or designee will make preliminary inquiry to ascertain whether the appeal is supported by available evidence. If not, the Chair or designee shall dismiss the appeal. The Chair, in consultation with the Director of the DOSW, may also assist in the resolution of the matter through administration disposition. Otherwise, an appeal hearing shall proceed according to the process outlined below.

The DOSW Student Affairs Committee will hear the appeal. Neither the faculty member involved in the academic decision/action that is the focus of the appeal nor the Director will be a member. The chair for the hearing is elected by the committee members.

THE CHAIR OR DESIGNEE WILL:

- Coordinate the appeal process.
- Notify the student and faculty member of the time and overall process of the hearing. Notify both the student and faculty member that all materials pertinent to the review, including whether any witnesses will be called, must be submitted to the Chair or designee at least (5) business days prior to the hearing.
- Distribute all materials pertinent to the appeal from the student and faculty member to members of the hearing panel and the student and faculty member at least three (3) business days prior to the hearing.
- Preside over all sessions of the panel; ensure procedural conduct consistent with fairness. Maintain, with the assistance of DOSW staff, integrity (of the record) and confidentiality of the proceeding except as required by administrative or other legal process.
- Dismiss any person from hearing room who becomes disorderly during proceedings; document behavior and subsequent action; and keep documentation with the record of the proceedings.
- Submit the panel's findings of fact and the recommendation to the Director in writing and with a rationale within five (5) days of the hearing. All panel members shall sign the findings of fact and recommendation.

APPEALS HEARING:

- The chairperson shall call the meeting to order. The chairperson will ask the appeal panel members, the student, and the faculty member to identify themselves. The chairperson shall review the procedural guidelines and the specific aims and limitations of the appeal process, e.g. the purpose is to ensure fairness to the student and not to substitute the judgment of the instructor.
- The conduct of the hearing will be informal and will be determined by the panel.
- None of the parties may be represented by legal counsel at the hearing, although a support person, approved by the chair of the hearing panel, may be present at the hearing. The support person may not testify or participate in the hearing.
- During the hearing both parties will be allowed to make a statement to the panel in support of their

case. Following this, both student and faculty member will have an opportunity to respond to the other's statement.

- After the student and the faculty member(s) have presented their statements and responses, questions may be raised.
- Witnesses may present statements on behalf of either the student or faculty/staff. The student, faculty member and committee members can ask questions of the witnesses.
- During any hearing, the panel is authorized to request the appearance or additional evidence of any student, faculty, staff member, or other employee of the University as witness.
- If the student or faculty member/staff does not appear at the hearing, the written statements will be the entire presentation by that person, and the panel's recommendation will be made accordingly.
- The hearing may take place by video conferencing. The conference will be scheduled by DOSW personnel and, at the discretion of the chairperson, may be set up with an impartial independent proctor to accompany the student at the distance site. At the end of the hearing, after the student and faculty are dismissed from the video conferencing, the audio/visual teleconference will be re-established with just the members of the hearing panel, if needed.
- The panel has five (5) business days following the hearing to render its findings of fact and recommendations.
- The panel shall submit, to the Director, its findings of fact and recommendations in writing, with all panel members' signatures.
- The panel shall follow established procedures, maintaining confidentiality of the hearing and related records.

THE DIRECTOR WILL:

- Receive the findings of fact and recommendation of the panel.
- Make a final decision within ten (10) business days after receipt of the panel's findings of fact and recommendation.
- Notify the parties in writing of their decision immediately thereafter. This does not preclude verbal communication of findings.

FURTHER APPEAL:

Further appeal shall be in accordance with the College of Health Sciences Appeals procedures.

APPROVED BY DOSW ADMIN TEAM ON July 7, 2017

Excluded from the above procedures is any allegation involving discrimination or harassment in violation of the University of Wyoming's Harassment and Discrimination. Those matters shall follow the procedures outlined in the above stated University policies.

Division of Social Work Readmission Policy

If for any reason, a student must take a leave-of-absence from the program, including the decision to defer admission to the following academic year once accepted into the program, the student must follow the readmission policy. The decision to readmit is based on the professional judgment of the MSW Program Admissions Committee following a re-admission hearing and is contingent on space available in the program. Students must meet the standards and curriculum requirements in effect at the time of readmission; students may also be required to repeat previous coursework. Readmission to any program/option requires a hearing. The process for a readmission hearing is as follows:

THE STUDENT WILL:

- Apply for readmission to the Program Director (MSW) which includes the following:
 - A letter requesting a readmission hearing.
 - A typed explanation of the circumstances that led to withdrawal or caused the unsatisfactory performance.
 - A typed proposal addressing the student's plan to satisfactorily complete the program.
- Any additional information may be submitted to the panel a minimum of four days prior to the hearing.

THE MSW PROGRAM ADMISSIONS COMMITTEE CONDUCTS THE READMISSION HEARING:

- The chairperson of the MSW Program Admissions Committee or designee will serve as the chair of the hearing panel and receives the application from the student.
- The panel is composed of MSW Committee members.
- The hearing will be limited to the panel members and the student

THE CHAIRPERSON OR DESIGNEE WILL:

- Notify the student of the time, place of the meeting and the timeline of the delivery of the final decision. Preside over the hearing.
- Call the meeting to order.
- Ask the panel members and student to identify themselves.

REVIEW THE PROCEDURE:

- The student will be asked to present their case. The panel may ask questions and/or ask for clarification.
- The student will be excused from the hearing.
- The panel will consider the student's oral and written presentations, the student's file in the Division of Social Work, the University records, and any other relevant materials.
- The panel will deliberate and make a final determination about the student's readmission.
- The panel will submit their recommendation to the appropriate Program Director within five business days of the hearing.

The Program Director will notify the student in writing of the outcome within ten business days of the hearing.

APPROVED BY DOSW ADMIN TEAM ON July 7, 2017

Policy on Transfers Between Part-Time & Full-Time Program Options

This policy establishes the conditions under which a student enrolled in the Full-Time (FT) MSW program option may petition to transfer to the Part-Time (PT) MSW program option. It is intended to provide flexibility for students whose circumstances change after program enrollment, while maintaining the academic integrity and sequencing requirements of the MSW curriculum.

Students currently enrolled in the full-time MSW option may petition to transfer to the part-time option when personal or professional circumstances make continuation in the full-time format impractical. Approval of transfer is not guaranteed and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Transfer from the part-time to the full-time option is not feasible due to the course sequencing structures of the two program options.

Eligibility

A full-time MSW student may be considered for transfer to the part-time option if they meet the following conditions:

- They have a circumstance that substantially impacts their ability to continue full-time.
- The student is in good academic standing.
- The student has no conduct violations or issues related to academic dishonesty.
- A viable transition plan can be constructed given the student's current standing and the part-time program sequencing requirements.

Petition Process

To be considered for transfer, the student must complete a petition and submit it to the MSW Program Committee for approval. Students are strongly encouraged to complete any in-progress coursework before transitioning, where feasible.

Step 1: Consult with Advisor: The student should first schedule a meeting with their assigned advisor and/or the MSW Program Director to discuss their situation. During this meeting, the advisor will review the student's current standing, completed and required coursework, the sequencing implications of a potential transfer, and the financial implications of making a change. If warranted and viable, they can move on to step two.

Step 2: Develop a Transition Plan: In collaboration with the MSW Program Director, the MSW Part-Time Program Coordinator, and the Field Director, the student will need to develop a transition plan outlining how they will complete the remaining required program requirements within the Part-Time structure. This plan should address course sequencing, field placement transition (if applicable), and an anticipated graduation timeline. The transition plan should be approved by the MSW Program Director, Part-Time MSW Program Coordinator, and Field Director (signatures indicate approval) prior to moving on to step three.

Step 3: Submit a Written Petition. The student must submit a written petition to the MSW Program Committee. The petition should include the following components:

1. A statement describing the circumstances prompting the request and why the student thinks the part-time option will meet their learning needs and professional development.

2. The proposed (and approved) coursework transition plan
3. An approved field placement/hours transition plan (as applicable)

Step 4: Committee Review and Decision. The MSW Program Committee will review the petition and transition plan and render one of the following decisions:

- Approved: transfer is approved as proposed
- Approved with Modifications: transfer is approved subject to specific conditions outlined by the committee
- Denied: transfer is not approved; reasons will be provided in writing

Approval of a transfer request does not guarantee a seamless transition. Due to differences in course sequencing between the FT and PT program options, some courses may not be available at the time of transfer. This policy cannot anticipate every possible circumstance. The MSW Program Committee retains discretion to evaluate each petition individually and render decisions accordingly.

APPROVED BY MSW PROGRAM COMMITTEE TEAM ON March 12, 2026

Graduation

In order to graduate, all students must complete an [Anticipated Graduation Date form](#). Students must also have successfully completed all coursework required for the graduate degree in social work.

Portfolio. Following the final presentation, the committee will engage in a collaborative discussion to reach a decision on the student's performance. In cases where there are concerns about a student's readiness to pass, the committee will work together to identify areas for improvement and may recommend additional steps or revisions before granting final approval. Portfolio students must submit their final and completed project to their chair.

Thesis. Thesis students must submit an approved Research Advisory Committee form, Report of Final Exam, and their final thesis to the Registrar's Office. The graduate These forms must be received no later than one week prior to graduation or other date as determined by the Registrar. Social work faculty and staff will assist students with filing these forms at the appropriate times.

Section IX: Division of Social Work Awards and Recognitions

Special recognition and award areas have been developed by the Division of Social Work at UW to express our appreciation for students, faculty and alumni achievements and, ultimately, to honor various types of contributions that support and advance the academic mission and direction of the Division. The Division of Social Work views these special recognitions and awards as a process that contributes to a spirit of "open appreciation" for the learning that is required of the social work professional, and the investment made toward achieving a social work degree--the commitment needed to become a competent integrated social worker. Below, each special recognition and award is described, including identifying the anticipated time frame for nominations, who can submit a nomination and some general criteria that defines these recognition awards.

For each special recognition area, the Division is responsible to give adequate announcement time requesting nominations be submitted. Nomination statements must address the defined criteria. The call for nominations (of graduating students) will be sent out electronically in the Spring semester of each year. Nominations with a clear nomination statement should be submitted via the electronic poll before final due date each spring.

An Awards Review Committee, appointed by the Director, consists of faculty members representing both campuses. This committee will also be responsible to periodically review the nomination processes and work to assure that these special recognitions bring positive benefit to the Division of Social Work—its students, faculty and alumni.

These special recognitions and awards will be presented at the Social Work graduation celebration each year and/or may be recognized at other events as they arise.

MSW Student of the Year Award

This special recognition is given to graduating MSW student or a defined group of students who has gone above and beyond the minimum requirements of the social work program. This student(s) should be a good student colleague, shown strong/outstanding growth as a social worker through their studies, and has taken on leadership and service roles. The student(s) should also show imagination, resourcefulness, and uphold the Code of Ethics. *Nominations from MSW students and faculty. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.*

Phoenix Award

This special recognition is given to a graduating BSW or MSW social work student(s) who has persevered to graduate, considering great personal challenge(s). The student must uphold the Code of Ethics.

Nominations from MSW and/or BSW students and faculty. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.

Student Recognition for Exemplary Community Service and/or Good Citizenship

This special recognition is given to MSW and/or BSW student(s) who has taken extensive leadership and service role(s) within the community. The student(s) should also show imagination, resourcefulness, and uphold of the Code of Ethics. *Nominations from MSW and BSW students and faculty. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.*

Graduate Social Work Student Research Special Recognition

This special recognition is given to a graduating MSW student or defined group of students doing group research that has developed and undertaken an exemplary research study in accordance with current Division

policies for a Thesis or Portfolio research. The student(s) must be in or beyond the data analysis stage in the research project. Students may be nominated in the year following their research completion and who may have been awarded their degree in the last 12 months. *Nominations from MSW students and faculty. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.*

Innovation and Creativity Graduate Student Special Recognition

This special recognition is given to an MSW student or defined group of students who has developed a creative and innovative project during their academic studies. *Nominations from MSW students and faculty. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.*

Field Instructor of the Year Special Recognition Award

This special recognition award is given to a Field Instructor who has provided mentoring, supervision, and support for the student throughout field placement. This is done by balancing the learning objectives and the needs of the agency; assists with creative ideas for a broad base of experience at multiple levels of practice (micro, mezzo, macro), provides consistent and constructive feedback while balancing task and process during weekly supervision, models professionalism, models and teaches ethical behavior, applies research and best practices, and has a commitment to social justice. *Nominations from students, faculty, and field agencies. Nominations accepted in spring. Presented at the Social Work Graduation Reception.*

Alumnus/a of the Year Award

Nominations from students, faculty, and community. This special recognition award is given to a social work student alumnus who graduated as either a BSW or MSW. The alumnus/a will have been working in the field for at least 2 years. The recipient should also have advanced knowledge of social work practices, made significant contributions to a social agency, contributed to the profession through their research, and/or contributed nationally and/or internationally in ways that demonstrate vital leadership and commitment to individuals and families. The award is presented at the College of Health Sciences Alumni Luncheon on Homecoming weekend.

Section X: CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The DOSW operates under the 2022 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation standards for providing competency-based education. This involves programs holistically assessing 9 core competencies identified below:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior.
2. Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
3. Engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) in practice.
4. Engage in practice-informed research and research-informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice.
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

These competencies are assessed in the classroom and field via a set of indicators developed by the faculty of the Division of Social Work. While the same 9 competencies must be assessed in both the BSW and MSW programs, the indicators used differ in the foundation and advanced levels of the MSW program.

Generalist Social Work

Generalist social work is conceptualized by the Division using the core competency-directed education mandated through EPAS 2022. Miley, O'Melia, and Dubois (2010) describe the way that social workers view their practice, a view that is like the view through a wide-angle lens of a camera. "Generalist social workers view problems in context, combining practice techniques to fit the situation, and implementing skills to intervene at multiple system levels" (p. 9). Viewing problems in context requires an understanding that client problems do not reflect individual "problems" but rather reflect evolving "multi-dimensional problem contexts" within which all of us with the present societal structures must negotiate.

Generalist practice necessitates an appreciation of the circular nature of the systems perspective:

Person in environment, along with an appreciation of the significance of relationships in the change process.

Advanced Generalist Social Work

Advanced generalists build upon the social work generalist foundation with increasing depth and breadth in advanced integrated practice with a specific focus on rural settings. Advanced integrated practice engages in the assessment of the multidimensional problem-setting using a strength-based approach, self-reflective leadership, and ethical advocacy for societal transformation (Lavitt, 2009). Advanced integrated practice requires multiple professional skills, ability to select among a wide range of alternatives, and creativity to address complex practice challenges in an ever-changing world. The MSW program's philosophical position is situated within Janet Finn's *Just Practice: A Social Justice Approach to Social Work* (2020). The MSW program focuses on the 5 key concepts of her book: *meaning, context, power, history, and possibility*.

Assessment of the multidimensional problem-setting is used to contextualize client issues within historical, present and future time domains, micro/mezzo/macro subsystems and multiple practice domains, including power, possibility, context, history and meaning (Finn, 2020). Advanced integrated practitioners use sophisticated reflection skills to analyze the "fit between one's theoretical models, methods, and their

effectiveness to produce the desired change” (Finn, pg. 268). Finally, advanced integrated practitioners promote justice-seeking interventions at all levels using social work values in order to be a catalyst for transformation. Advanced integrated practice challenges the artificial divide of micro/macro practice that promotes competition for resources and students. Instead, the advanced integrated practitioner is grounded in the *Just Practice* framework of social justice with an emphasis on reflexivity and critical thinking and a commitment to the ongoing development of consciousness relative to the historical and political context of social work and the contexts within which we, as social workers, and our clients live (Finn & Molloy, 2020).

Advanced integrated practitioners:

- assume a key role in societal transformation through reflective leadership, assessment of multidimensional problem-setting, and ethical advocacy to promote social justice locally and globally,
- negotiate real world practice needs which are unique, ambiguous, unstable and complex in situations defined by value conflicts, and
- use a multidimensional practice approach that focuses not only on micro, mezzo and macro levels, but also on the historical context, power dynamics, meaning, and possibility.

For more detailed information on accreditation standards, please refer to the CSWE [website](#).

References

- Finn, Janet (2020). *Just Practice: A Social Justice Approach to Social Work* (4th ed.). New York: Oxford Press.
- Finn, Janet, & Molloy, Jen (2021). Advanced integrated practice: Bridging the micro-macro divide in social work pedagogy and practice. *Social Work Education*, 40(2), 174-189.
- Lavitt, Melissa R. (2009). What is *advanced* in generalist practice: A conceptual discussion. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 29(4), 461-473.

Appendix A: Student Success Plan: Didactic Courses

Student Name:

Student ID:

Faculty Name:

Date:

Course:

Details
Description of Issue/Behavior
Plan for Success:
Timeline and Potential Outcome:
Acknowledgement
Student Signature/Date
Faculty Signature/Date
Faculty Advisor Signature/Date
Program Director Signature/Date

Appendix B: Student Success Plan: Field Education

Student
Name:
Student ID:
Faculty
Name:
Date:

Details
Description of Issue/Behavior
Plan for Success:
Timeline and Potential Outcome:
Acknowledgement
Student Signature/Date
Faculty Signature/Date
Field Instructor Signature/Date
Faculty Advisor Signature/Date
Faculty Liaison Signature/Date
Program Director Signature/Date