



ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF NURSING AND HEALTH PROFESSIONS  
DEPARTMENT of SOCIAL WORK

MASTERS of SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM  
STUDENT HANDBOOK

2023-2024

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## **WELCOME FROM THE DIRECTOR OF THE MSW PROGRAM**

Congratulations on your decision to pursue a graduate degree in social work! You are joining a profession that is dedicated to helping people build more functional and fulfilling lives. Historically, social workers have been active in many important social efforts. For example, Jane Addams, who established Hull House in Chicago (1889), advocated for peace and social justice, and was the first woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Currently, social workers are making a difference in the lives of people in the halls of Congress and state legislatures, hospitals, substance abuse programs, schools, nursing homes, homeless shelters, family agencies, health clinics, hospice programs, behavioral health organizations, and a variety of other settings.

Social Work graduate education at Arkansas State University will help prepare you to be a competent and ethical social work professional. You will gain knowledge and skills required for rural-based clinical practice; however, you also will be prepared to practice in other areas as well. You will find your work here challenging but the faculty believes you are up to the challenge and we are ready to help you succeed. You will find yourself asking new questions and discovering that complex answers are required to address social issues. Expect to be changed as a professional and as a person.

You are about to become an essential part of a learning community where knowledge, experience, feelings, and skills are shared in a safe environment. A learning community requires commitment of both faculty and students alike to each other and to the learning process. We are all learners, teachers, and doers. During your time in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program, I hope you will take advantage of the faculty expertise and utilize field settings to maximize your learning opportunities. Engage with your fellow students and faculty members as you make this journey together.

Again, welcome to A-STATE Master of Social Work Program.

# Cheryl Knight

Dr. Cheryl Knight, DSW, LCSW

MSW Program Director

Social Work Department Chair

## **ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

### **MISSION STATEMENT OF ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY**

The mission of Arkansas State University is to educate leaders, enhance intellectual growth and enrich lives.

### **ACCREDITATION**

Arkansas State University is accredited by The Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association (NCA) of Colleges and Schools. A-STATE was first accredited in 1928 and has had continuous accreditation since that time. The MSW Program at A-STATE is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) effective beginning in the academic year 2008-2009.

### **NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

The Arkansas State University Master of Social Work Program celebrates diversity. We welcome all applicants for admission without regard to race, color, gender, age, religious affiliation, ethnicity or national origin, physical condition, or sexual orientation.

<https://www.astate.edu/a/affirmative-action/>

### **MSW PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT**

The mission of the MSW Program at A-State is to provide a transformative educational experience that emphasizes respect for diversity and prepares graduates for compassionate, ethical, clinical practice that enhances the well-being and quality of life for individuals, families, groups, and communities. Graduates understand the importance of connectedness and work to improve the quality of life for all persons from the local to the global level. Graduates utilize contemporary, evidence-based theories and approaches to intervene and bring about positive changes including economic, environmental, racial, and social justice. MSW courses are developed and delivered with an emphasis on rural social work, trauma-informed care, the importance of human relationships, dignity and worth of person, human rights, and service. The MSW program graduates competent individuals who exemplify and uphold the CSWE and NASW Code of Ethics.

### **MSW PROGRAM GOALS:**

1. Education for Clinical Practice: Building on a foundation of generalist social work practice, the MSW prepares graduates for competency-based, clinical practice with an emphasis on rural context.
2. Knowledge Development: The MSW program contributes to the knowledge base of the profession through the faculty's leadership in scholarship and community collaborations. Students develop critical thinking and research skills to address the problems and needs of diverse, multilevel client systems and further contribute to the profession's knowledge

base. Graduates of the MSW program will engage in career-long learning to continually develop their professional knowledge base and practice skills.

3. Service: The MSW program at A-STATE creates an environment that promotes in students and faculty a desire to serve others by contributing time, effort, and other resources to address the needs of the community in which we live, learn and beyond.
4. Education for culturally sensitive practice: Graduates of the MSW program at A-STATE will demonstrate a commitment to social and economic justice by changing conditions which oppress and marginalize people, particularly in rural environments.

The Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education define the competencies that are common to all social work practice. Each competency is composed of knowledge, values, and skills that define what social workers must know and be able to do to practice effectively. The CSWE core competencies serve as the program goals for the Arkansas State University MSW program and are as follows:

## **COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION (CSWE)**

### **2022 SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES**

#### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in inter-professional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- a) make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, additional codes of ethics within the profession as

appropriate to the context, and The Nine Social Work Competencies 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

- b) demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication.
- c) use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes.
- d) use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

### **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels
- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels.
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

#### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision-making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from inter-professional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

- a. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs.
- b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

- a. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services.



- b. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as inter-professional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

### **Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities**

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as inter-professional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and inter-professional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other inter-professional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in inter-professional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as inter-professional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

- a. Social workers:
  - a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes.
  - b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE MSW PROGRAM**

Building upon generalist practice, which includes strengths-based and client-centered perspectives, the clinical concentration is grounded in trauma informed cognitive behavioral therapy, stages of change, and family systems theory.

## **DIVERSITY IN THE SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT**

As a Department, we value and respect differences among the students with regard to national origin, family structure, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, physical ability, race, and other characteristics. We work closely with the Office of Access and Accommodations in providing support for students. Graduate students also vary in terms of their undergraduate backgrounds.

Students come to the Department with degrees in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, Business, Interdisciplinary Studies, English and many other major concentrations.

### **MSW STUDENT ORGANIZATION**

The Social Work Student Organization provides a forum for undergraduate and graduate students to organize, develop supportive relationships, communicate with each other and faculty, and promote the collective interests of the social work program and profession. The Social Work Student Organization is open to all social work students and meets quarterly during the academic year.

### **MSW CURRICULUM OVERVIEW**

The MSW Program offers both full-time and part-time study for post-baccalaureate students and offers two pathways for degree completion:

1. Advanced Standing Program:
  - This program is only available to applicants who have received a BSW degree from a social work program that is accredited by CSWE. Advanced Standing Students can complete the 36-credit hour program in 12 months.
2. Standard Program:
  - This 63-credit hour program is designed for students with a baccalaureate degree in any discipline and any student who does not meet requirements for the Advanced Standing option. Students in this program complete the Foundation curriculum consisting of 27 credit hours and then complete the 36-credit hour Advanced curriculum. Students can complete this program in 25 months.

### **COURSES:**

#### **Standard**

SW 5003 HBSE I

SW 5333 HBSE II

SW 5023 Foundation of SW Practice I

SW 5043 Foundation of SW Practice II

SW 5053 Social Welfare Policies /Services

SW 5063 Social Justice & Diversity

SW 5702 Foundation Field I (140 hours)

SW 5712 Foundation Field II (140 hours)

SW 5722 Foundation Field III (140 hours)

Elective

### **Advanced**

SW 6003 Psychopathology

SW 6013 Social Work Ethics

SW 6083 Trauma-Focused Practice

SW 6063 Social Work Rural Policy Analysis

SW 6023 SW Evaluation and Research

SW 6093 Service and Leadership in SW

SW 6033 Practice w/ Individuals

SW 6053 Practice w/ Groups & Families

SW 6702 Advanced Field I (168 hours)

SW 6712 Advanced Field II (168 hours)

SW 6722 Advanced Field III (168 hours)

Elective

Elective

### **ADDICTIONS CERTIFICATE**

Students enrolled in the MSW Program may elect to complete a certificate in Addictions Studies.

Students must request permission to enroll in the Certificate Program by contacting the Coordinator of the Addictions Certificate Program, Dr. Cheryl Knight, DSW, LCSW at 870-972-3984 or [cknight@astate.edu](mailto:cknight@astate.edu). Students take two courses (which also count toward required elective hours) in addictions studies: SW 5323: Substance Abuse and Dependence Interventions and SW 6323: Clinical Interventions in Substance Abuse & Dependence. Students must complete their internship in an approved agency that offers them the opportunity to work with clients with substance abuse disorders.

### **SOCIAL WORK FIELD EDUCATION**

We are pleased that you are interested in the Arkansas State University Department of Social Work. We would like to introduce you to our field education program. Field education is a central component of the MSW curriculum. Field education provides an opportunity for students to apply and integrate classroom knowledge with hands-on experience. Students will receive professional supervision by an individual who has an MSW degree from an accredited university. The A-State MSW Program offers a 420 hour generalist field practicum and a 504 hour advanced clinical field practicum.

Students in the online MSW program are responsible for locating a field placement within their geographic location that meets the field agency criteria, and provide this contact information to the Director of Field Education through the field application process. Field site agencies are approved based on their ability to provide students with the educational experience needed to meet CSWE requirements, appropriate supervision of an LMSW or a LCSW, completion of the university's affiliate agreement, and willingness to participate in needed orientations and meetings with faculty throughout the student's internship. Field agencies can represent a wide variety of services such as mental health, child welfare, the juvenile and adult justice system, substance abuse programs, public schools, medical settings, hospice programs, and many more. Students have the opportunity to serve a broad range of populations, including children and adolescents, older adults, individuals with disabilities, victims of domestic violence, veterans, and the mentally ill, to name a few.

The internship will begin with the student in an observational role with independent work being assigned as the Field Supervisors, student and faculty feel it is appropriate. The Field Supervisor and student will develop a learning agreement that guides the internship assignments and activities. Throughout the field placement, the student is required to receive a minimum of one-hour weekly supervision by the Field Supervisor. The student will also participate in online weekly discussion boards and other weekly assignments in which they will have the opportunity to process their experiences with other students, and identify how they can apply theory and skills in their practice. The online field course is led by a faculty liaison that is available for ongoing consultation to the field agency, and will make at least one virtual site visit during each semester to meet with the student and the Field Supervisor to evaluate and monitor the student's progress in demonstrating the social work competencies.

Students often find their field education to be the most exciting and rewarding aspects of their professional social work education. If you would like more specific information about field education, please feel free to contact the Director of Field Education, Donna Parker, at (870) 972-2527 or [dparker@astate.edu](mailto:dparker@astate.edu). You may also view the Field Education Manual on the Social Work website.

## **MASTERS IN SOCIAL WORK ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

### **APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. Completed 100% Online Application <https://admissions.astate.edu/apply/?sr=b3ce1088-adda-448d-9709-31eb1a903b43>
2. For admission to the Standard Program, students must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours of degree work. In addition, the following pre-requisites must be completed with a grade of "C" or better, before admission: American Government, General Biology and Lab, Introduction to Psychology, Introduction to Sociology, Statistics, and Introduction to Social Work.
3. For admission to the Advanced Program, students must have a 3.2 or better on a 4.0 scale in the last 60 credit hours of the BSW degree from a CSWE accredited program. There is no conditional admission to the Advanced Program.

## **CRIMINAL BACKGROUND AND CENTRAL REGISTRY CHECK**

The MSW Program does require criminal background checks for all entering MSW students. The MSW applicant will be given directions for the background check after the application to the program is made. The MSW program reserves the right to deny admission based on background check findings.

## **LIFE WORK/EXPERIENCE POLICY**

Life or previous work experience will not be accepted in lieu of social work courses or course credit.

## **ADMISSION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

Requirements and admission processes for International Students are posted on the Arkansas State University website. Currently, the MSW Program is not accepting International Students due to rapidly increasing admission numbers.

## **ACADEMIC ADVISING**

At Arkansas State University, advising is a shared responsibility between the student, faculty advisor and college community designed to help students grow individually, succeed academically, and to develop an appropriate educational plan leading to graduation with a focus on their life beyond the university. The university acknowledges its obligation to provide students with accurate and timely academic advising, delivered through its academic departments, colleges, and other units devoted to specific student populations. Advisors serve as professional mentors as well as experts regarding the academic program for students. Students are encouraged to meet regularly with their advisors to discuss general career planning in social work. Students work out a plan of study with their advisors, and must contact their advisor each semester in order to be cleared to register for courses in the next semester. Students need to contact their advisor if they plan to change their plan of study (for example, change from part time to full time study). Students should also notify their advisor of any plans to withdraw from a course, the University or the MSW program prior to taking such actions.

## **DEFERRED ADMISSION**

Students who have been admitted to the MSW program may have their start date deferred to the following academic term/year by submitting a request in writing/email to the MSW Program Director. As a condition of deferred status, the student must submit a letter of intention to enroll by the application deadline for that term/year. In addition, the applicant bears the responsibility for contacting the Director of Field Education.

## **REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF STATUS**

Students enrolled in full time or part time degree options may request a change of status. Prior to initiating a request, this decision should be discussed with the advisor. Requests must then be made

in writing to the MSW Director. Requests will be granted based on availability of space. The sooner the request is submitted, the greater the likelihood that it can be accommodated.

### **APPLICATION TIMELINES**

Rolling admissions for both the Advanced and Standard Programs- Advanced admits 3 times per year and Standard admits 6 times per year.

## **STANDARDS FOR ACADEMIC RETENTION IN THE PROGRAM**

### **ELIGIBILITY FOR DEGREE**

A cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher on all coursework used toward the graduate degree is required and a cumulative graduate GPA of 3.00 or higher on all coursework taken from the academic college of the graduate degree sought is required before a graduate degree can be awarded.

### **PROBATION**

Any graduate student whose cumulative GPA on all courses taken for graduate credit falls below 3.00 at the end of a semester will be placed on probation. Students may be removed from probation by raising their cumulative GPA to 3.00 or better at the end of a semester. Failure to make a grade of “B” or better in each course taken while on probation will result in suspension from further graduate work. A graduate student on probation is not eligible for graduation.

### **SUSPENSION**

Any graduate student who receives a grade of “F” in any graduate-level course will be suspended from the University and program.

### **READMISSION OF SUSPENDED STUDENTS**

Upon recommendation of their advisor and department chair with the approval of the Office of the Provost, a student may apply for readmission to the University on probation, after a minimum two 7-week semesters.

Readmission to the University does not imply readmission to a particular degree program. A student must reapply to the program and will only be readmitted upon recommendation of their advisor and department chair. A student suspended a second time is ineligible for readmission to the same program. If a student is suspended from more than one program they are ineligible for readmission to the University.

### **DROPPING INDIVIDUAL COURSES (OTHER THAN ONLY ENROLLED COURSE)**

The final date for dropping individual courses is identified by Academic Affairs for each semester.

The Academic Calendar is also published on the Office of Admissions, Records and Registration web page (<http://registrar.astate.edu>) for each semester.

Students who drop individual courses will receive a grade of W in the courses. Students enrolled in only one course cannot drop that course, instead they must withdraw from the university.

### **WITHDRAWAL FROM THE UNIVERSITY (INCLUDING DROPPING ONLY ENROLLED COURSE)**

Students may withdraw from the university using Self-Service. Deadlines can be found on the Academic Calendar.

Students receiving Financial Aid should discuss this with the Office of Financial Aid before making a final decision.

Grades earned in courses completed prior to official withdrawal from the university (i.e., short courses) will not be affected by that withdrawal. Classes that have been withdrawn will remain on the student's transcript with a "W" grade for withdrawal. Once the withdrawal process is complete, the classes withdrawn will not affect the student's GPA.

### **ONLINE STUDENTS WITHDRAWAL FOR NON-ATTENDANCE:**

Withdrawal Non-Attendance (WN) can only be assigned for students who have never logged into Canvas for online classes. Students who have logged into Canvas at any time once the term has begun are NOT eligible for a WN even if they have not completed any assignments. These students must complete the normal drop or withdrawal process.

### **WITHDRAWAL STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Students are responsible for dropping/withdrawing from all classes they are not attending. Student should not depend on the University to assign a grade of WN. Students should review their schedule of classes using Self Service to make sure their enrollment is accurate. They should check their midterm grades as soon as they are available to confirm their enrollment is still accurate. Students should check their transcript at the end of final grading each semester to be sure it accurately reflects their enrollment and grades. Failure to do so could result in unnecessary financial obligations and inappropriate grades (usually F's).

Students who find a mistake need to contact the Registrar's Office for proper procedures immediately upon discovery. It is the student's responsibility to make sure their transcript is an accurate reflection of the student's registration and participation in the course(s) at A-State.

### **REINSTATEMENT:**

To get reinstated to a class after being dropped for non-attendance. Not to be used if student accidentally drops a class online. A memo from the instructor on department letterhead must be submitted stating the student has been attending.



## **STUDENTS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **STUDENTS IN THE MSW PROGRAM HAVE THE FOLLOWING RIGHTS**

1. The right to ethical treatment from others.
2. The right to be informed of expectations of them in classes and in the field.
3. The right to engage in free inquiry.
4. The right to express unpopular or different views.
5. The right to learn in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.
6. The right to exercise the grievance and appeals procedures, or report instances of discrimination or sexual harassment or violations of the NASW Code of Ethics without fear of reprisal.
7. The right to have meaningful input into their educational experience.
8. The right to participate in a feedback process that keeps them informed of their progress and performance throughout their educational experience.
9. The right of persons with disabilities to reasonable accommodations.
10. The right to involvement in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs in their interest.

### **STUDENTS RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCES**

See A-STATE Student Handbook for Students Rights Grievance Procedure.

<https://www.astate.edu/a/student-conduct/student-standards/handbook-home.dot>

### **STUDENTS IN THE MSW PROGRAM HAVE THE FOLLOWING RESPONSIBILITIES**

1. The responsibility to stay informed of policies and procedures of the MSW Program and the University as a whole.
2. The responsibility to maintain ethical and legal behavior.
3. The responsibility to maintain high standards of academic integrity (e.g. plagiarism and cheating).
4. The responsibility to inform faculty or register with Access and Accommodations if they need special accommodations to successfully complete course work or field work.
5. The responsibility to know and meet the requirements of their particular A-State graduate Bulletin.
6. The responsibility to treat members of the academic community as well as those associated with their field experience, especially clients, with dignity and respect.
7. The responsibility to comply with the A-State Student Conduct Code, the Code of Honor and Substance Abuse Contract of the College of Nursing and Health Professions

### **SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES**

Social media can be a way to share life experiences and opinions with others. Use of social media presents risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort via the internet or other electronic communication method. Social media includes both your personal or someone else's

personal web log/blog, journal, website, or chat room, and group interchanges such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snap Chat, or YouTube and social media anonymous sites. These applications are subject to having content transmitted to others, with or without consent from the original author. Additionally, per the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) regulations <https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/privacy/special-topics/deidentification/index.html>, no information, pictures, videos or descriptions of clients/families can be posted on social media sites. You are solely responsible for what you post online. Inappropriate postings specific to patients, classmates, or faculty that include discriminatory remarks, harassment or threats, or violations of professional codes of conduct are subject to disciplinary action. Your actions could adversely affect your standing in your health professions program which could include program dismissal. You should be aware that future employers may view potential candidate's websites. Students are advised to review their site(s) for any unprofessional images or language which could adversely affect successful employment upon graduation. Please make responsible decisions about your use of social media.

Media can be a way to share life experiences and opinions with others. Use of social media presents risks and carries with it certain responsibilities.

## **STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES RELATED TO EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

Students are expected to conduct themselves with respect for self and others and to adhere to ethical conduct requirements of social workers in course work as well as in the field placement.

Students may be dismissed from the Program for failing to meet the standards for academic retention in the program. Students may also be dismissed from the program for failing to demonstrate academic integrity and or professional conduct and behavior.

### **STANDARDS FOR STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

#### **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Arkansas State University promotes academic integrity and professional ethics among all members of the A-State academic community. Violations of this policy are considered as serious misconduct and may result in severe penalties, up to and including expulsion from Arkansas State University. A student deemed to have engaged in academic misconduct may not avoid academic sanctions by withdrawing from a class, a program, or the University. Students that participate in the Honors College and/or Athletics program(s) are subject to dismissal from those programs in addition to the penalties set forth below. The respective program(s) will be notified of any offense. Colleges and Departments may add to these prohibitions and standards applicable to all students in order to enforce academic integrity and professional ethics to meet their special needs for a specific degree program.

For the purposes of these definitions, an assignment includes any task assigned as a course requirement or program requirement. Assignments include but are not limited to papers, projects, homework, and exams.

## **A. PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is the act of taking, using, and/or presenting the idea(s), work(s), and/or writing(s) of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

1. Submitting as one's own any theme, paper, report, computer program, presentation, creative work, or scholarly work of any nature belonging to, or written or created by another.
  - a) To avoid plagiarism, give written credit and acknowledgment to the source of thoughts, ideas, and/or words, whether you have used direct quotation, paraphrasing, or just a reference to a general idea.
  - b) If you directly quote works written by someone else, enclose the quotation with quotation marks and provide an appropriate citation (e.g., footnote, endnote, bibliographical reference).
  - c) Research for an assignment, as well as the complete assignment, must be the work of the person seeking academic credit for the course.

## **B. CHEATING/UNAPPROVED COLLABORATION**

Cheating is an act of dishonesty with the intent of obtaining and/or using information in a fraudulent or unauthorized manner. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- a) Observing and/or copying from another student's assignment.
- b) Giving or receiving assistance during an examination period. This includes providing specific answers to subsequent examinees and/or dispensing or receiving information that would allow the student to have an unfair advantage in the examination over students who did not possess such information.
- c) Using class notes, outlines, and/or other unauthorized information during an examination.
- d) Using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, or soliciting, in part or in whole, the contents of an assignment when such action is not authorized by the instructor of the class.
- e) Using for credit in a subsequent class an assignment written for credit in a previous class without the knowledge and permission of the instructor of the subsequent class. This includes when a student is repeating a course for credit.
- f) Impersonating or attempting to impersonate another person, or permitting or requesting another person to impersonate you for the purpose of taking an examination or completing other assignments.
- g) Unauthorized collaborating during an examination, lab, or any course requirement with any other person by giving or receiving information without specific permission of the instructor.
- h) Altering grades or official records.
- i) Falsifying or signing another person's name on any academically-related University form or document.

- j) Sabotaging or interfering with the academic progress of others.
- k) Submitting altered, fraudulent, or falsified data, course, degree program requirements, including but not limited to honor's thesis; doctoral dissertation; qualifying exam; dissertation defense, and University records/forms.

### **PROCEDURE FOR HANDLING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES**

1. **Step One:** Any faculty member or University official who suspects an act of academic misconduct occurred for which they deem sanction appropriate, must report this information, along with a recommended sanction, directly to the Office of Academic Affairs via the Academic Misconduct Report Form within five (5) business days of becoming aware of the act. Academic Affairs will consult with the student's academic department, and review any prior academic misconduct the student was found responsible for, to determine in consultation with the academic department if administrative-level sanctions should be added and which sanction is appropriate. No sanction will go into effect until a finding of responsibility is made.
2. **Step Two:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the academic misconduct referral, Academic Affairs will notify the student through official University channels of the alleged offense and related sanction(s). This notification will include instructions for preparing for a hearing, should the student disagree with the allegation. The notification will also include educational materials about avoiding future academic misconduct (For example, University-level citation and documentation expectations). Additionally, an academic misconduct meeting between the student and an Academic Affairs representative will be arranged to apprise the student of the allegation and related sanction(s). The student will accept or deny responsibility at this time. Students who do not respond to the notification will be deemed to have waived their denial of the alleged act and any objection to the related sanction(s). A student who accepts responsibility will be found responsible and the related sanctions will be imposed.
3. **Step Three:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the meeting with Academic Affairs, a student disagreeing with the allegation must submit their request, in writing to Academic Affairs, for an academic misconduct hearing before the University Academic Integrity Committee (UAIC), along with any written material the student would like the Committee to consider. The UAIC is a shared governance committee which will consist of three faculty members, two undergraduates, and one graduate student from each academic college. The Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Services and the Graduate Dean will serve as Ex Officio members. The convening committee for academic misconduct hearings is three faculty members and one student. For cases involving academic misconduct of a graduate student, the student representative will be a graduate student. The UAIC only determines whether the student is responsible and does not determine the sanction. The sanction imposed upon a finding of responsibility is determined in Step One and presented to the student in Step Two.
4. **Step Four:** Within five (5) business days of receipt of the written request for

Committee hearing, the case goes to the University Academic Integrity Committee for determination of responsibility.

5. **Step Five:** Within three (3) business days of receipt of the Committee's determination, a student disagreeing with the hearing outcome may appeal in writing to the Provost. If the student does not appeal within the applicable timeframe, the Office of Academic Affairs will notify the involved parties, and the sanction(s) related to the academic misconduct the student was found responsible for will be imposed by the appropriate party.
6. **Step Six:** Within three (3) business days of the Provost's receipt of the written appeal, the Provost will make a final determination based upon the written appeal and all documents related to the allegation and hearing. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify all involved parties of the determination. If the finding of responsibility stands, the sanction(s) related to the academic misconduct the student was found responsible for will be imposed by the appropriate party. All cases of academic misconduct will be housed within Academic Affairs. Prior offenses will be considered when determining the sanction(s).

### **Sanctions for Academic Misconduct**

No sanction, including removal from class, may be imposed prior to a finding of responsibility. Acts of behavioral misconduct are not covered by this section and should be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Academic Misconduct that occurs in clinical, field, and internship sites is subject to sanctions established by the respective program. These sanctions may or may not be included in the list below.

Course-level sanctions for Academic Misconduct can be imposed by the faculty member or instructor who discovered the Academic Misconduct upon a finding of responsibility (see Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct Charges).

The following course-level sanctions may be imposed by the instructor for academic misconduct:

- An alternative assignment;
- A failing grade on the assignment;
- Rewriting or repeat performance of assignment; and, or
- A failing grade for the class;
- Completion of educational module;
- A reduction of grade for assignment.

In addition, the following administrative-level sanctions may be imposed for Academic Misconduct upon a finding of responsibility based on the seriousness and/or prior acts of academic misconduct of the respective student. Administrative-level sanctions are determined by the student's academic department in consultation with Academic Affairs:

- Completion of education modules;
- Removal from the course;
- Dismissal from a particular program;
- Suspension from a particular program for one semester or more;
- Suspension from the University for one semester;
- A failing grade for the course
- Expulsion from the University; and/or
- Other appropriate sanctions as warranted by the specific acts of the student.

### **STANDARDS FOR PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE**

The Social Work Program requires that students demonstrate the highest level of professional and ethical conduct. Failure to demonstrate appropriate interpersonal and ethical behaviors including but not limited to the following is grounds for dismissal:

1. Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics
2. Threatening, intimidating, discriminatory or harassing behaviors
3. Inability to form adequate relationships with others
4. Inability to accept and integrate feedback, particularly from faculty and field supervisors
5. Disruptive behaviors that undermine the teaching, learning and morale of others
6. Inability to perform due to personal problems such as substance abuse
7. Inadequate work skills such as absences and tardiness
8. Inability to recognize and respect personal/professional boundaries
9. Non-compliance with agency policies and procedures
10. Inability to engage in social work practice.

## **PROCEDURES FOR REVIEWING ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL**

### **CONDUCT IN THE MSW PROGRAM**

The Social Work Department has established formal review procedures for identifying, evaluating, developing a corrective action plan and suspending or dismissing an individual who fails to meet the academic and professional performance standards of the Program. There are three levels of performance review. Please be aware that at any point in the process the instructor can complete an academic misconduct form and submit to Academic Affairs.

#### **Level 1 Performance Review**

A Level 1 review involves a faculty member and a student. When a faculty member has concerns about a student enrolled in the social work program meeting any of the academic or professional performance standards, that faculty member will:

- Discuss the concerns directly with the student and seek to work with the student to resolve the difficulties.
- Appraise the advisor and appropriate Program Director of the concerns in order to identify potential patterns and issues related in this student's behavior.
- Document dates, content, and outcome of meetings with the student (signed by both).

If a problem arises in field, the agency-based field supervisor will discuss concerns directly with the student and with the faculty liaison. It is the responsibility of the faculty liaison to apprise the Field Director of the concerns.

In many instances, meetings between faculty and students result in resolution of the concerns and do not necessarily lead to further reviews, pursuant to this section. However, if the concerns are not resolved in the opinion of either the student or faculty, the student must be informed of the right to request the participation of their advisor or another faculty member of their choosing in further levels of review.

#### **Level 2 Performance Review –**

A Level 2 Performance Review, convened by the Program Director (MSW, Field), usually occurs when concerns regarding performance issues raised at Level 1 have not been resolved satisfactorily. Level 2 Performance Review may also occur when student conduct requires a documented corrective action plan. A level 2 involves the student, their advisor, the appropriate Program Director (MSW, Field) and faculty members as indicated. If a problem arises in field, the agency-based field supervisor, faculty liaison, and Field Director will meet for the review.

In this information gathering process, the MSW Director or Field Director will seek to determine the nature of the concern and gather sufficient information to develop a plan to address the concern or concerns, if one is needed. The MSW or Field Director will utilize conflict resolution and mediation skills where possible. No further action may be required, or the student may be asked in writing to modify his/her behavior and/or seek appropriate help. This process is designed to assist the student in dealing with identified concerns that negatively impact their performance. The

MSW Director or Field Director will assess the concerns with appropriate faculty, consult with the Department Chair and maintain documentation. The Level II Performance Review Committee may decide to:

1. Retain the student in the program on probationary status
2. Specify requirements and conditions for remaining in the program.
3. Suspend the student from the program (can reapply in one year)
4. Request a Level 3 review be convened by the Department Chair.

The Performance Review Committee will document the discussion and their decision and inform the student in writing. The student may appeal the decision to the Department Chair.

### **Level 3 Performance Review**

A Level 3 review is convened and facilitated by the Department Chair/MSW Program Director and generally includes the student, their advisor, the Field Director and field supervisor if indicated, and relevant members of the faculty. This level of review is indicated when problematic patterns are identified with a student, particularly involving unprofessional, illegal, unethical or incompetent behaviors. A Level 3 Review may be initiated when lower review levels have not achieved satisfactory results, or when the student's behavior rises to such a level that withdrawal or dismissal is under consideration.

The Department Chair/MSW Director will meet with appropriate faculty and the student to gather information, determine the nature of the problem (if one is confirmed to exist) and identify alternatives for its remediation. Appropriate faculty to be involved in a review will include but are not limited to those who have direct knowledge of and experience with the student. The student will be notified in writing of the concerns and meeting date, with sufficient time to prepare for and attend the meeting. The student may invite a faculty member of his/her choice or an advisor to participate in the proceedings.

After the review meeting has concluded, the Department Chair/MSW Program Director will consult with the Professional Review Committee members to reach a decision. The student will be informed in writing of the committee's decision within three working days. The student may be instructed to refrain from attending field or social work classes until notified of the decision. Options available to the committee include but are not limited to the following:

1. Continue the student in the program with no conditions
2. Establish formal conditions for the student to continue in the program
3. Consult with the University's Academic Affairs and Research
4. Counsel the student to change majors/degree programs
5. Suspend the student with conditions for return



6. Dismiss the student.

In any Level 3 Review, there must be clear, concise documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that these have been discussed with the student, that a corrective action plan has been developed with the student and that the student has been given the opportunity to complete the plan with the support of the Social Work Department, unless the precipitating behavior is of such a grievous nature that corrective action is not indicated. The student must be notified of the decision in writing within ten business days of the review meeting. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair/MSW Program Director to communicate the decision to the student. At this time, the student must be informed of her/his right to appeal under University policy.

### **DISMISSAL OR REMOVAL FROM FIELD**

Field agencies who request that a student be dismissed or removed from field must discuss the situation with the student and contact the Field Director and provide written documentation of their concerns. The Field Director in consultation with the field supervisor, field faculty liaison and the appropriate Program Director will evaluate the situation and determine whether or not the student should be placed in an alternative site. The Field Director may elect to convene a Professional Review Committee of the appropriate level. If retained in the program and placed in another agency, the field faculty liaison and/or faculty advisor will work with the student to produce a plan of action for the student to correct the behavior that led to dismissal. By the end of the semester, the student must demonstrate improvement or correction of the behavior that led to the dismissal from the first field site. If the student fails to improve or demonstrate correction of the behavior that led to dismissal from the field site, the student will have failed to meet the Program requirements and will be dismissed.

## **DEPARTMENTAL PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT GRIEVANCE INVOLVING FACULTY**

The MSW Program follows the University's Grievance Process:

Step 1: Since the faculty has the primary responsibility for course development, course delivery, the assessment of student achievement, and the sanction for academic misconduct, any student who has a complaint related to an academic issue should first consult with the course instructor within ten (10) working days of the incident and try to resolve the complaint. If the grievance involves a faculty member who is no longer employed at the university, or with whom the student does not feel comfortable approaching the student should move to step two of this process. If the complaint is resolved, the grievance process ends.

Step 2: If the complaint is not resolved in step one, and if the student wishes to pursue the complaint further, the student shall consult with the department chair/unit supervisor within fifteen (15) working days of the academic incident. The appropriate chair/unit supervisor shall consult informally with the student and the individual against whom the complaint has been made to attempt to resolve the complaint. The chair/unit supervisor shall notify the student and the individual against whom the complaint has been made in writing of the resolution or lack

thereof within ten (10) working days of the student's first consultation with the chair/unit supervisor. If the complaint is resolved, the grievance process ends.

Step 3: If the complaint is not resolved in step two, and if the student wishes to pursue the complaint further, the student shall file a formal written complaint with the department chair/supervisor within thirty-five (35) working days from the academic incident. The written complaint must specify the academic right(s) the student alleges has (have) been violated and must include:

- Date and details of the alleged violation;
- Any available evidence of the alleged violation;
- Names, addresses, and phone numbers of witnesses to the violation;
- The requested remedy to the alleged violation.

The chair/unit supervisor shall investigate the complaint using whatever processes are appropriate including, but not being limited to, written responses from or interviews with faculty members, other students, and other parties. The chair/unit supervisor shall notify the student and the individual against whom the complaint has been filed in writing of the chair/unit supervisor's finding and recommendation within ten (10) working days of receipt of the written complaint. If both parties in the complaint accept the recommendation, they will sign a statement to that effect and the grievance process ends. The chair/unit supervisor shall retain the written records of the process for five calendar years. Upon request, the chair/unit supervisor shall provide either or both parties with copies of all information gathered during the investigation.

Step 4: If the complaint is not resolved in step three, either party may request that the dean appoint a college hearing committee. The request for a college hearing committee review must be made in writing to the dean within ten (10) working days of completion of the process listed in step three.

#### A-State Online Students and Those Residing Out-of-State

Students, including A-State Online students and those residing Out-of-State, must follow Arkansas State University's published grievance policy. If any student must report an unresolved grievance, the student may complete the student complaint form for the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) found at: <http://www.adhe.edu/students/parents/colleges-universities/student-grievance-form/> Resolution by ADHE are final. Students must submit a written grievance to ADHE using the form. The grievant must also provide written documentation from Arkansas State University verifying that the A-State appeal process has been followed. Grievances regarding student grades or conduct violations are governed entirely by institutional policy and Arkansas law and will not be considered by ADHE

## STUDENT RESOURCES

### STUDENT FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

**For further information please contact Financial Aid/ Scholarships Office:**

P.O. Box 1620

State University, AR 72467-1620, (870) 972-2310

Website: <http://finaid.astate.edu>

### OFFICE OF ACCESS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Students who require academic adjustments in the classroom due to a disability must first register with A-STATE Access and Accommodations. Following registration and within the first two weeks of class, please contact Dominique White at 972-3694 to discuss appropriate accommodations. Appropriate arrangements can be made to ensure equal access a course. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Access and Accommodations if they need assistance. <https://www.astate.edu/disability>

### TITLE IX

The Office of Title IX & Institutional Equity is charged with the responsibility to oversee the University's compliance efforts with state and federal laws surrounding Title IX, Affirmative Action, Non-Discrimination, Equal Opportunity, and campus-wide initiatives aimed at creating a diverse, welcoming and equitable campus. <https://www.astate.edu/a/affirmative-action/>

### HOUSING

<https://www.astate.edu/a/university-housing/housing-options/>

### COUNSELING CENTER

The Wilson Counseling Center is committed to helping you benefit as much as possible from your experience at A-State. This support may include helping you to perform better academically, to cope with your emotions, or to be more effective in your relationships with others. <https://www.astate.edu/a/counseling-services/>

### WRITING CENTER

The Online Writing Center offers writing services to A-State Online students so they may develop habits that lead to successful written communication. Our staff consists of tutors from various writing backgrounds that understand the struggles and joys of writing. We provide tutoring for all writing stages, from understanding the prompt and outlining to grammar and finalizing the paper. Successful writing comes from developing a network of interrelated skills and strategies, and we look forward to working with you to aid in this process!

<https://www.astate.edu/a/global-initiatives/online/a-state-online-services/online-writing-center/>

## **PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORK RESOURCES**

### **NASW**

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is “a membership organization that promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers” (Arkansas, NASW, 2003). The national NASW organization may be accessed, via the World Wide Web, at [www.nasw.org](http://www.nasw.org). The Arkansas State Chapter of the NASW can be contacted at: <http://www.naswar.org>. Students receive a special membership rate and have access to practice insurance while in school. All students are encouraged to join the NASW.

### **NASW CODE OF ETHICS**

The NASW Code of Ethics guides all social workers in ethical practice. The code can be accessed at: <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/Code/code.asp>.

### **ARKANSAS SOCIAL WORK LICENSING BOARD**

Licensing information and continuing education requirements are listed on this site.

Social Work Licensing Board

P. O. Box 250381

Little Rock, AR 72225

(501) 372-5071

[HTTP://WWW.ARKANSAS.GOV/SWLB](http://www.arkansas.gov/swlb)

### **COUNCIL ON SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

<https://www.cswe.org/>