

# Student Handbook

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## **Master of Social Work Program**

Department of Social Work  
College of Health and Human Development  
California State University, Fullerton  
2024-2025

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Education Classroom 207  
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[MSW Website](#)

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## A NOTE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Welcome! My hope is that this handbook is a constant companion for MSW students, as your “go to” for program information and policies. It’s vital that every student familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook because it outlines important information that will impact your time in the MSW program. Please consult the Department’s [Student Field Education Manual](#) for information, policies and practices related to Field Education. If you have questions about anything contained in his handbook, please reach out to the Social Work department, or me personally for clarification. Our goal with this handbook is to provide guidance to you on department policies and practices, which we hope will increase clarity and facilitate a smooth graduate school experience.



Dr. Michelle Martin

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## PURPOSE OF THE HANDBOOK

This handbook contains important information about expectations, department policies as they pertain to students, and students' rights. Students are expected to read this manual and familiarize themselves with its content. This manual is not a substitute for the current catalog of the California State University, Fullerton. Students are to be familiar with the official University policies delineated in the [University Catalog](#). The University Catalog is the primary source of policies and procedures governing all academic programs.

## FACULTY AND STAFF

The department consists of full-time faculty (tenured, tenure-track and lecturers), part-time faculty, university staff and grant-funded staff. The following list of faculty and staff is designed to guide students in knowing who to contact, when needed. Faculty bios and email addresses are contained on the [Department of Social Work website](#).

### Full-Time Faculty (in alphabetical order)

- Lori Allemand, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer
- Gabrielle (Gabbie) Aquino-Adriatico, Ph.D., MSW, Assistant Professor
- Caroline Bailey, Ph.D., Associate Professor
- Gordon Capp, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor
- David Chenot, Ph.D., MSW, LCSW, Emeritus Faculty
- Brittany Eghaneyan, Ph.D., MSW, Assistant Professor
- Michelle Fernandes, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer
- Marlene Flores-Avila, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer
- Sean Hogan, Ph.D., MSW, Professor
- Juye Ji, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor
- Mikyong Kim-Goh, Ph.D., MSW, LCSW, Emeritus Faculty
- Karen Kyeunghae Lee, Ph.D., MSW, LCSW, Associate Professor
- Erica Lizano, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor
- Michelle Martin, Ph.D., MSW, Associate Professor, Department Chair
- Marcella Mendez, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer, Student Field Director
- Debra Saxton, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer, Community Field Director
- Kelly Segovia, MSW, LCSW, Lecturer, Admissions Coordinator
- Duan Tran, MSW, Lecturer
- Eun-Hye Grace Yi, Ph.D., MSW, Assistant Professor

### Part-Time Lecturers

Refer to the [MSW website](#) for current list

## Administrative Staff

Refer to our website for [current MSW staff](#).

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The [Community Advisory Board](#) serves as the official bridge between the Department of Social Work and the community. The Board advises the faculty on issues relevant to the Community/University relationship and serves to support the Department in a variety of ways. They discuss the nature of field education instruction and the relationship between class and their field experience. They participate in fundraising efforts and represent the Department at events at the University and in the community. The Chair of the Department is the link between the Board, faculty, and student body.

### UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

California State University, Fullerton enriches the lives of students and inspires them to thrive in a global environment. We cultivate lifelong habits of scholarly inquiry, critical and creative thinking, dynamic inclusivity, and social responsibility. Rooted in the strength of our diversity and immersive experiences, we embolden Titans to become intellectual, community, and economic leaders who shape the future.

### UNIVERSITY VALUES

**Student success:** We educate confident, innovative, and culturally competent Titans who continuously adapt to meet and exceed new workforce demands, social justice challenges, and community service opportunities.

**Scholarly and creative activities:** We cultivate and promote the collaborative exchange of ideas through rigorous academic and creative activities.

**Diversity, equity, and inclusion:** We commit to our rich diversity by increasing culturally proficient and equity-minded practices across all campus communities.

**Civic engagement:** We encourage free expression, both as a right and a responsibility, and aim to inspire all Titans to be informed, active, and engaged citizens.

**Collegial governance:** We embrace inclusivity, consultation, collaboration, and transparency to bring all Titans into the deliberative process that shapes our communities, challenges our beliefs, and addresses the needs of a diverse global society.

**Integrity:** We act from a foundation of ethical principles and through the cultivation of strong character.

**Service to the region:** We provide a place and space for the region's current and future leaders to grow and develop in ways that inspire them to better serve our communities.

### DEPARTMENT MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

The mission of the Department of Social Work at California State University, Fullerton, is to educate emerging and committed professionals for social work practice with vulnerable,

marginalized, and underrepresented populations. We are committed to developing competent, ethical, and effective social workers who will promote integrity in the profession and provide leadership in advancing social work knowledge, addressing social problems, and advocating for social justice. We engage communities and organizations in an effort to educate developing professional social workers while offering the wider community relevant expertise and assistance. We believe in the inclusion of individuals and groups from socially, culturally, and economically diverse environments, with special sensitivity to the multicultural communities of Orange County and the Southern California region. We also educate students toward a greater understanding of social work, human rights, and social justice from a global perspective.

### **Social Work Program Goals**

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice; the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights; the elimination of poverty; and the enhancement of life for all people, locally and globally. ([CSWE 2022](#)).

The Social Work Program goals are to:

1. Promote faculty, student, and community collaboration in research
2. Promote and integrate social and economic justice across the curriculum
3. Advance an innovative and effective program led by competent and diverse faculty
4. Enhance engagement with diverse communities through mutually empowering partnerships
5. Prepare students to become leaders in effecting change

### **Core Values**

Service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

### **Generalist Practice Objectives**

Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in

practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. ([CSWE 2022](#)).

The objective of the Master of Social Work Program is to educate committed, culturally competent professionals for direct social work practice with vulnerable populations. Students of various academic and career backgrounds are brought together to be educated on social work-related topics with specialized emphases placed on multicultural groups, organizations and communities.

The California State University, Fullerton, Master of Social Work Program defines its overall objective as the preparation of students for professional social work practice. This is the foundation which sets the context for the achievement of specific competencies as defined in the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy Statement.

### **CSWE Competencies**

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

### **Specialized Practice Objectives**

Specialized practitioners extend and enhance social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes, and demonstrate an ability to engage, assess, intervene, and



evaluate across client populations, problem areas, and methods of intervention. In each area of specialized practice defined by the program, the program extends and enhances the nine social work competencies that are demonstrated in observable behaviors indicative of competence in specialized areas of professional practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and use the knowledge and skills necessary for interprofessional collaborations based on scientific inquiry and best practices, consistent with social work values. They engage in both research and advocacy in their commitment to changing structural inequities and to informing and improving practice, policy, and service delivery. ([CSWE 2022](#)).

### **Areas of Focus**

Within the context of the specialized practice curriculum, all students must select an area of focus. The three areas of focus available to full-time students in the CSUF MSW program are *aging*, *child welfare*, and *community mental health*. Students in the part-time program can select either *child welfare* or *community mental health*. The specialized social work practice and policy courses in the specialized generalist practice curriculum correspond to each student's area of focus.

### **Aging Focus**

The Aging focus prepares students to become gerontological social workers, helping older adults and their families maintain well-being, overcome problems and achieve maximum potential during later life. A key function of a gerontological social worker is to promote independence, dignity, and autonomy.

#### *Objectives:*

- Students will demonstrate knowledge of social work roles and practices in working with older adults.
- Students will understand the physical, psychological, emotional, and social impacts of the aging process on older adults.
- Students will understand the diversity present in working with older adults and its implications to competent social work practice with this population.
- Students will articulate his or her attitudes and beliefs toward older adults and working with an aging population.
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of historical evolution of aging policies and services in the U.S.

Students will demonstrate familiarity with social, organizational and political theories and principles for service delivery systems to older adults that guide federal, state and local policy making and service delivery.

## **Child Welfare Focus**

The Child Welfare focus prepares students to promote and empower children and their families' safety, permanency and their well-being in public and private child welfare agency settings including welfare/protective services, health care, mental health public social services, schools, community-based outpatient agencies, corrections/juvenile justice, residential treatment, programs for persons with developmental disabilities, domestic violence shelters and other specialized programs.

### *Objectives:*

- Students will, upon graduation, assume leadership and policy advocacy roles in social welfare agencies serving children and families.
- Students will demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills to engage in direct practice interventions with clients in public child welfare settings.
- Students will demonstrate skills necessary to practice with diverse populations in a variety of practice venues using multicultural sensitive assessment and intervention frameworks.
- Students will learn and apply research, evaluation and evidenced-based literature in a systematic and applied manner to build a knowledge base for action on behalf of clients and agencies.
- Students will gain the information and understanding necessary to conduct a direct practice that meets legal and ethical standards within the context of the values of the social work profession and accepted child welfare practice models.

## **Community Mental Health Focus**

The Community Mental Health focus prepares students to work with various client populations across the mental health care system including children, families, adults, and older adults.

### *Objectives:*

- Students will, upon graduation, assume leadership and policy advocacy roles in social welfare agencies serving community mental health clients.
- Students will demonstrate advanced knowledge and skills to engage in direct practice interventions with clients in community mental health settings.
- Students will demonstrate skills necessary to practice with diverse populations in a variety of practice venues using multiculturally sensitive assessment and intervention frameworks.
- Students will learn and apply research, evaluation and evidenced based literature in a systematic and applied manner to build a knowledge base for action on behalf of clients and agencies.

- Students will gain the information and understanding necessary to conduct direct practice that meets legal and ethical standards within the context of the values of the social work profession and within guidelines for appropriate mental health practices.

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **Master of Social Work (MSW) Curriculum**

The MSW at CSUF requires completion of *60 semester unit hours* over two years of *full-time* study or three years of *part-time* study. Foundation coursework is based on a generalist social work practice curriculum that prepares students for specialized generalist practice in one of three focus areas, *Aging, Child Welfare, or Community Mental Health*. While these focus areas are designed to allow students to specialize on a particular population, the student's education will contain sufficient generalist practice information to allow them to transfer this knowledge to any population or service setting. The program will emphasize a *direct practice* method. This methodological approach is designed to prepare students for specialized practice and leadership roles in public and non-profit social services agencies serving children, youth, older adults, and families and in those providing community mental health services to the chronically and seriously mentally ill.

### **Generalist Practice Curriculum**

The generalist practice (first year) curriculum courses provide students with knowledge of critical thinking within the social work context, and an understanding of the values of the profession and its ethical standards and principles. All generalist practice courses address the issue of social work practice without discrimination and focus on the value of respect for clients regardless of age, class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, family structure or disability. The generalist practice courses provide students with:

- Knowledge of the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues
- Understanding of how to apply generalist practice skills within systems of all sizes
- How to function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems
- How to seek necessary organizational change.

The multicultural perspective is a key component of the California State University, Fullerton, Master of Social Work Program. The key goal in emphasizing the multicultural perspective is to prepare students to practice social work effectively in an increasingly complex and diverse society. Therefore, all courses in the MSW program incorporate a multicultural perspective in the curriculum, with the goal of increasing students' sensitivity to the specific needs of all social and cultural groups.

- MSW 501: Social Work Perspectives on Human Behavior I (3)
- MSW 502: Social Work Perspectives on Human Behavior II (3)
- MSW 503: Social Work Perspectives on Human Behavior III (3)
- MSW 510: Social Work Practice I (3)
- MSW 511: Social Work Practice II (3)
- MSW 520: Social Welfare Policy and Services I (3)
- MSW 521: Social Welfare Policy and Services II (3)
- MSW 530: Applied Social Work Research Methods I (3)
- MSW 540: Social Work Field Instruction I (3)
- MSW 541: Social Work Field Instruction II (3)
- MSW 550: Social Work Practice with Diverse Populations (3)

### **Specialized Practice Curriculum**

The advanced generalist practice curriculum builds upon the generalist practice courses and are more focused in nature, preparing students for autonomous professional social work practice in the areas of aging, child welfare, or community mental health. At the advanced generalist practice level, students are expected to understand theory, analyze it for its contextual properties and implement culturally competent practice in one of the focus areas. Additionally, students will be prepared to evaluate their practice and programs and create research questions that demonstrate advancement of ideas with specific populations. Furthermore, students are expected to understand the connection between personal troubles and social issues and realize that social change is a natural extension of social work practice at all levels. They will be prepared to advocate and organize to this end. Under the supervision of program approved field education instructors, students will complete internship hours that allow them to carry out advanced generalist practice curriculum objectives. At the conclusion of their study, students will prepare a capstone project that reflects their knowledge, skills and values as professional social workers.

### **Aging Focus**

The California State University, Fullerton, Master of Social Work Program aims to prepare advanced gerontological social work professionals as change agents who have a current knowledge of theories related to aging process, policy, and practice.

- MSW 516: Aging: A Multigenerational Perspective: Advanced Social Work Practice (3)
- MSW 524: Aging: A Multi-Generational Perspective: Policy and Social Work (3)
- MSW 542: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction I (3)
- MSW 543: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction II (3)
- MSW 564: Macro Social Work in Communities and Organizations (3)
- MSW 596: MSW Master's Project Development (3)

MSW 597: MSW Master's Project (3)

*Electives: May be taken inside or outside of the MSW program (6)*

MSW 570: Social Work Practice with Addiction Disorders (3)  
MSW 571: Social Work Perspectives on Developmental Psychopathology and Family Context (3)  
MSW 572: Spirituality, Religion, and Social Work (3)  
MSW 573: Trauma-Focused Social Work Practice (3)  
MSW 574: Death and Dying: Social Work Practice and End-of-Life Care (3)  
MSW 575: International Social Work (3)  
MSW 578: Social Work Practice with Latino/a Populations (3)  
MSW 579: Advanced Social Work Practice in Integrated Behavioral Health Care (3)  
COUN 522A: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3)  
COUN 525: Psychopharmacology for Counselors (3)  
COUN 535: Addictions Counseling (3)  
PSYC 545: Advanced Psychopathology (3)  
AGNG 503: Aging and Public Policy (3)

### **Child Welfare Focus**

The California State University, Fullerton Master of Social Work Program aims to prepare advanced child welfare professionals as change agents who have a current knowledge of theories related to children, youth, and family services.

MSW 512: Child Welfare: Advanced Practice I (3)  
MSW 522: Child Welfare Policy and Social Work (3)  
MSW 542: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction I (3)  
MSW 543: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction II (3)  
MSW 564: Macro Social Work in Communities and Organizations (3)  
MSW 596: MSW Master's Project Development (3)  
MSW 597: MSW Master's Project (3)

*Electives: May be taken outside of the MSW program (6)*

MSW 570: Social Work Practice with Addiction Disorders (3)  
MSW 571: Social Work Perspectives on Developmental Psychopathology and Family Context (3)  
MSW 572: Spirituality, Religion, and Social Work (3)  
MSW 573: Trauma-Focused Social Work Practice (3)  
MSW 574: Death and Dying: Social Work Practice and End-of-Life Care (3)  
MSW 575: International Social Work (3)  
MSW 578: Social Work Practice with Latino/a Populations (3)

- MSW 579: Advanced Social Work Practice in Integrated Behavioral Health Care (3)
- COUN 522A: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3)
- COUN 525: Psychopharmacology for Counselors (3)
- COUN 535: Addictions Counseling (3)
- PSYC 545: Advanced Psychopathology (3)
- AGNG 503: Aging and Public Policy (3)

### **Community Mental Health Focus**

The California State University, Fullerton, Master of Social Work Program aims to prepare advanced mental health practitioners with a current knowledge of theories related to care, support and activism in the community mental health arena.

- MSW 514: Community Mental Health: Advanced Practice I (3)
- MSW 523: Mental Health Policy and Social Work (3)
- MSW 542: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction I (3)
- MSW 543: Advanced Social Work Field Instruction II (3)
- MSW 564: Macro Social Work in Communities and Organizations (3)
- MSW 596: MSW Master's Project Development (3)
- MSW 597: MSW Master's Project (3)

*Electives: May be taken outside of the MSW program (6)*

- MSW 570: Social Work Practice with Addiction Disorders (3)
- MSW 571: Social Work Perspectives on Developmental Psychopathology and Family Context (3)
- MSW 572: Spirituality, Religion, and Social Work (3)
- MSW 573: Trauma-Focused Social Work Practice (3)
- MSW 574: Death and Dying: Social Work Practice and End-of-Life Care (3)
- MSW 575: International Social Work (3)
- MSW 578: Social Work Practice with Latino/a Populations (3)
- MSW 579: Advanced Social Work Practice in Integrated Behavioral Health Care (3)
- COUN 522A: Diagnosis and Treatment Planning (3)
- COUN 525: Psychopharmacology for Counselors (3)
- COUN 535: Addictions Counseling (3)
- PSYC 545: Advanced Psychopathology (3)
- AGNG 503: Aging and Public Policy (3)

### **Field Education Instruction**

Field education is an integral component of the curriculum in social work education. Students enrolled in the field experience spend 16 to 20 hours each week in a field placement applying the knowledge, skills, and values learned in other courses. The field experience is guided by an individualized learning contract that students develop with their field education instructors. They

meet with a field supervisor or agency task supervisor for a minimum of 1½ hours per week. As part of the field instruction, students also participate in a weekly two-hour seminar.

Students will take Field Education Seminars MSW 540 and MSW 541 during the first year of the program. Field Seminars provide students with opportunities to process the experience gained in the field placement agency, gain insight into themselves and direct practice modalities, and explore alternative approaches. During the second year of the program, students will take MSW 542 and MSW 543. These Specialized Year Field Seminars help the student process the experience gained in the field placement and to further expand their direct practice skills. By the end of the program, students will have logged a minimum of 1050 clock hours in field placement.

The MSW program places students in agencies in Orange and adjacent counties. A selected group of highly qualified field faculty members supervise students placed in those agencies. Field placement assignments are collaborative decisions of the Directors of Field Education, field faculty, field supervisor, student, and, in some cases, the Program Director.

The [\*Student Field Education Manual\*](#) is the definitive guide on field education policies and practices.

### **Master's Project (Capstone)**

The CSU system requires a culminating experience for graduate education in the form of a thesis or a project. The MSW program requires students to participate in the Master's Project as the culminating experience and as a prerequisite to graduation and awarding of the MSW degree.

This is a self-directed project encompassing two courses during the Specialized (Advanced) Year. Students will utilize the skills they've learned throughout the program and must demonstrate competency in all CSWE competency areas.

## **REGISTRATION AND SCHEDULING**

Students with questions about registration should first consult the university [Registration Guides](#). Part-time students can also review the [MSW Flex Current Student Center](#). Students are provided with a registration date by the university Registrar and the Social Work Department has no control over those dates and times. If students are unable to register for their preferred courses, they are encouraged to email the Elizabeth (Liz) Gebhardt, the Department Coordinator ([ecollins@fullerton.edu](mailto:ecollins@fullerton.edu)) to request a schedule change. The Social Work Department cannot guarantee that students will receive their desired schedule, but we will do what we can to accommodate student needs. We are unable to increase course caps in practice and field seminars due to accreditation faculty/student ratios.

## ADMISSIONS CRITERIA

Admission into the MSW program is a competitive process. Comprehensive information can be located on the [Department website](#). A summary of admissions criteria is listed below:

- Fall admission only
- Bachelor's degree
- An educational foundation in Liberal Arts/Social Sciences. If you have a bachelor's degree from either the University of California or the California State University systems, you meet the liberal arts requirement.
- Minimum GPA of 3.0 for the last 60 semester or 90 quarter units
- Graduate Record Examination (optional)
- Three letters of recommendation
- Paid, volunteer, or internship experience relevant to social welfare
- Personal statement
- Interview with admissions committee

## DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

The University confers the MSW degree upon fulfillment of the following requirements:

### Credit Requirements

For the program, completion of 60 hours of graduate credit is required.

### Completion of the Field Education Experience

A student in the program must successfully complete the generalist practice field component to be eligible to enter the specialized field placement component. To be eligible for graduation the student must complete the specialized field component.

### Advanced Standing

The Department does not currently have an Advanced Standing program, but it is committed to ensuring that baccalaureate social work graduates from CSWE-accredited programs do not repeat what has been achieved in their baccalaureate social work programs, presuming they meet the following criteria:

1. **Notification of Eligible Students:** Incoming students who may qualify for waivers/transfers of BSW-level course work will be notified by the Department Chair or Admissions Coordinator upon acceptance into the program of the process for requesting course waivers/transfers.
2. **Timeframe of BSW Completion:** BSW-level coursework must have been taken within the previous five (5) years prior to enrollment in the MSW program at CSUF.



3. **Course Eligible for Transfer:** Only courses in the generalist (foundation) year can be transferred into the MSW program.
4. **Criteria for Transfer:**
  - a. **GPA:** Only generalist (foundation) courses in which students have earned a B+ or better (3.5 or 85%) can be transferred into the MSW program, except a research course, which requires an A (4.0 or 96%).
  - b. **Syllabus Review:** BSW-level courses must have equivalent content to the relevant MSW course and will be accessed via a syllabus review conducted by a full-time faculty member who regularly teaches the courses under consideration.
  - c. **Testing and Paper Assessment:** BSW-level courses must have equivalent content to the relevant MSW course and will be accessed via an equivalency exam and/or writing a comprehensive paper assigned in the relevant MSW course. A full-time faculty member who regularly teaches the courses under consideration will proctor the exam and grade the exam and/or the academic paper.
  - d. **Decision Process:** The Department Curriculum Committee in coordination with the Department Chair is responsible for making decisions on transfer of credits of generalist (foundation) year academic courses.
  - e. **Transferring Credits for Generalist Field Experience:** Required verification of BSW-level field seminars may include a review of copies of relevant syllabi, statements from field instructors and supervisors on the nature of the student's work and a review of the field agency scope and service delivery to ensure that the level and nature of work is commensurate with MSW-level generalist year field education roles and responsibilities. BSW-level field seminars must be 3-credit hours and can be CR/NC. Final determinations of field seminar course transfer of courses are made by the Field Directors in coordination with the Department Chair.
5. **Mechanism for Requesting Transfer of BSW-level courses:**

Students who have graduated from a CSWE-accredited BSW program and wish to transfer in courses that meet the above criteria must complete the following:

  - a. Send a request via email to the chair of the department that includes the course(s) they wish to have waived, a syllabus from each course, a catalog course description (or link to the university catalog) for review.
  - b. After submitting their request, students will be provided with the syllabus for the class they wish to test out of. They will have two weeks in which to study for the exam or write the paper. This must take place before the beginning of the semester; location for taking the exam will be arranged by the instructor and student.
  - c. The Department Chair in coordination with the Department Curriculum Committee will review the materials provided and will determine whether the student must "test out" of the course or write a comprehensive paper.

- d. If an exam is required, a full-time faculty member who regularly teaches the course will facilitate and grade the exam. Students must receive a grade of “B” (3.5) or higher for the transfer to be approved.
- e. If a paper is deemed most appropriate to assess the equivalency of the course, a full-time faculty member who regularly teaches the course(s) will assign and then grade the paper.
- f. The student will be notified before the beginning of the Fall semester and registration guidance will be provided.

### **Life or Work Experience**

In accordance with the standards of the accrediting body, the Council on Social Work Education, it is the policy of the Program not to grant academic credit for previous life or work experience at either the undergraduate or graduate level.

### **Specified Study Plan**

The MSW program has a set curriculum that varies only with program pace and area of focus. Each MSW student is assigned an academic advisor who will provide virtual and face-to-face support in the selection of courses each semester. Students will receive their Plan of Study via email prior to registering for classes. Students will be enrolled in a Canvas “course” that provides additional information.

### **Academic Performance Requirements**

All graduate students must maintain a [grade point average of 3.0](#), or an average grade of "B" or better in all courses taken to satisfy the requirements for the degree as specified in each student's Plan of Study. A course in which no letter grade is assigned shall not be used in computing the grade point average.

### **Time Limit for Completing the Program**

Full-time students normally complete the program in two years, and part-time students will normally complete the program in three years. Courses are offered to allow students to complete the program within those times. [CSUF Graduate Studies](#) specifies that a master's degree shall be completed within a five-year period. When individual circumstances warrant, this time limit may be extended for up to two years. A student may request an extension by working with their academic advisor to submit a petition with the Office of Graduate Studies prior to the expiration of the five-year limit.

### **Withdrawals and Leaves of Absence**

Students who find it necessary to cancel their registration or to withdraw from all classes after enrolling for any academic term are required to follow the university's official withdrawal procedures to withdraw from both the program and university. Failure to follow formal university procedures may result in an obligation to pay tuition and fees as well as the assignment of failing grades in all courses and the need to apply for readmission before being permitted to enroll in another academic term.

Graduate degree students may be granted leaves of absence, up to two consecutive semesters, which maintain their place in the university and in degree or credential programs (i.e., they do not have to reapply following the leave). A leave granted to a degree objective student also preserves the election of curriculum rights regarding catalog requirements. However, a leave granted by the university does not extend time limitations imposed by the State for competing specific credential requirements nor does it extend the time limit for completing the master's degree.

Grounds for approval of a leave include: (1) illness or disability or similar personal circumstances including pregnancy; (2) activities which enhance a student's professional career objectives; (3) active duty in the armed forces; and (4) other reasons at the discretion of the Director, Graduate Studies. An approved leave of absence authorizes the student to return and continue under the catalog requirements that applied to his or her enrollment prior to the absence. However, a leave granted by the university does not exempt the credential candidate from new requirements imposed by the State of California regardless of the student's catalog year.

In the case of non-approved breaks in enrollment, reapplication for admission to the university and to the chosen degree or credential program will be required. A place in the degree/credential program or in the university will not be held for the student in these circumstances.

Forms for requesting a leave of absence are on the [Office of Graduate Studies website](#).

### **Medical Withdrawals**

A medical withdrawal usually constitutes complete withdrawal from the program and university for the academic period in question. Requests for complete medical withdrawals should be submitted as soon as possible after the medical condition impairs the student's ability to complete the coursework for which the student is registered. Additional information on medical withdrawals can be found on the [Office of the Registrar website](#).

Note: MSW Students who are considering a medical withdrawal should contact their academic advisor.

## **Continuous Enrollment for Graduate Candidacy Standing**

Graduate students who have been advanced to candidacy and have completed all course work required by the master's degree program but who have not completed the culminating experience (Master's Project) may enroll in GRAD 700 through the Graduate Studies Office for the purpose of maintaining continuous enrollment at CSUF. The student will continue to register for this course each academic term until the culminating experience requirement for the master's degree is completed, within the 5-year limit specified by Graduate Studies.

## **Application for Graduation**

A student becomes a candidate for graduation after a graduation check request is submitted and the fee is paid for graduation by the student and an affirmative recommendation is made by the Graduate Program Adviser. An overall minimum graduate grade-point average of 3.0 (B) for all Study Plan coursework is required. See the [Office of Graduate Studies website](#) for information on graduation preparation including deadlines for filing for graduation and changing the anticipated date for graduation.

## **Graduation Hooding and Commencement**

All graduating students are eligible to participate in the Commencement and Department Hooding ceremony. If you are a graduation candidate for Fall 2024 (January 2025), Spring 2025 (May 2025) or Summer 2025 (August 2025), then you will be eligible to participate in the May 2025 Commencement and Hooding. *Students who have outstanding coursework in the Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 academic semesters are not eligible to participate in May 2025 Commencement or Hooding ceremonies.*

## **STUDENT ACADEMIC ADVISING**

### **Purposes of Advisement**

Academic advisement is an integral part of the educational experience and a major faculty responsibility. The advisement system has the following purposes: 1) to provide each student with a faculty member who knows the student's educational interests, goals, and educational program and who serves as a resource in assisting the student in his/her total educational experience; 2) to provide the Program with a clear channel through which to carry out certain administrative functions in reference to each student, 3) to provide students with advocacy and support if they experience challenges that affect their academic and professional responsibilities, and 4) to assist students with connecting to campus resources, services, and student support programs.

### **Advisement as a Tool to Students**

Every student is assigned to an academic advisor before they are invited to the program orientation. These faculty advisers serve several roles, including providing academic and career guidance, program support and professional gatekeeping.

Students are enrolled in the advising Canvas site and are expected to familiarize themselves with its content. Academic advising is a self-directed process, thus if students have questions about the academic plan, are experiencing challenges and/or need guidance, they should email their academic advisor and set up an appointment.

The advising Canvas course contains self-guided modules which students can access to receive virtual academic support resources. Students are encouraged to engage with these modules as a means of meeting their academic needs.

Students who are referred for an Academic Support Meeting (ASM) or a Student Status Review (SSR) will be notified by their academic advisor, who will serve as their advocate throughout these processes. Academic advisors will also initiate contact with any advisee who is on academic notice.

Students whose GPA falls below a 3.0 are automatically placed on academic notice. The department's Graduate Studies Liaison receives notification of students on academic notice from the Office of Graduate Studies and passes this information onto faculty advisors.

### **Advisors Selection**

Advising assignments are determined by evaluating several factors, including ease of access and professional interest. Students will remain with the same advisor throughout their educational program, when possible. Discussions between advisors and students are not confidential but are subject to FERPA regulations, thus consultation with other faculty and/or the department chair will occur only if deemed necessary (and in accordance with FERPA regulations).

### **Area of Focus and Academic Plan of Study**

Students will receive two emails in the first week of the semester from Adobe Sign confirming their Area of Focus and their Academic Plan of Study. Students are required to select the acknowledgements and sign both forms within a designated timeframe. It's vital that students return both forms on time.

## **STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

CSUF Department of Social Work is committed to ensuring students are aware of their rights and responsibilities in the MSW program and within the university.

## **Students' Rights**

Students have the right to exercise their constitutional rights or other lawful activities, which include a freedom of speech and dissent. Students have the right to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs, including, the right to:

1. Select a student representative to attend public portions of bi-monthly faculty meetings.
2. Select a student representative to attend bi-annual Community Advisory Board meetings.
3. Volunteer as a leader of the student leadership club, Master of Social Work Association (MSWA), serving as a liaison between students and the MSW program administrators and faculty.
4. Attend monthly "Coffee with the Chair" to directly express any concerns or provide feedback.
5. Have access to an academic advisor for academic and programmatic support, including advocacy in relation to student policies and procedures.
6. Provide anonymous feedback on faculty and course curriculum every semester in university administered Student Opinion Questionnaires.
7. Request an Academic Support Meeting (ASM) with your advisor present to obtain additional support to ensure academic and program success (see section on Academic Support Meetings below).
8. Initiate a Conflict Resolution meeting with your academic advisor present to collaboratively resolve conflicts with students, program staff or faculty.
9. Have your academic advisor with you during all disciplinary hearings.
10. Provide anonymous feedback on the annual student program evaluation facilitated online by the Department Chair.
11. Review their records upon enrollment, except for those excluded by law. Excluded records include confidential information about parent's financial status and letters of recommendation for which the student has waived the right to review.
12. Students have the right to grieve program policies and procedures to the Department Chair (see Student Grievance Policy below).

## **Student Opportunities**

### ***Student Organization***

Students are encouraged to organize in their interests by joining the [MSWA](#), a student led organization that aims to empower MSW students at CSU Fullerton through community, peer support, and professional development. The MSWA offers a variety of events, programs, and opportunities for MSW students to network, gain experience, and connect through community events, participating a peer support programs (e.g., mentorship program), becoming a cohort representative, joining the MSWA Discord, accessing MSWA Resource Drives, and receiving early RSVP access for professional development events (e.g., training and skills workshops).

Students who graduate with at least two semesters of membership will also receive an MSWA graduation cord.

### ***Student Participation on Committees***

MSW students are represented on several standing committees, including the bimonthly faculty meeting, the Explicit and Implicit Curriculum Committees, and the Graduation Planning Committee. The Department Chair will email the MSW student body at the beginning of each academic year seeking interest.

Students in their Specialized Year of the program can also serve as a Team Leader for NASW Legislative Lobby Days in Sacramento. A “call of interest” will be sent via email to all eligible students toward the end of the Fall semester. This is a competitive selection process with up to 10 students being selected to attend.

### **Students’ Responsibilities**

MSW students are expected to abide by all university policies and procedures and are responsible for becoming familiar with all relevant policies, located on the university website. Some important policies are included below:

#### ***Ethical Conduct***

The university and MSW program expect students to behave with high ethical standards. Students should refer to and be aware of all university policies in this regard to ensure their conduct does not violate any university policies (see below).

MSW students are also bound by the NASW Code of Ethics. It is the student’s responsibility to be familiar with these policies and abide by them. Thus, students are highly encouraged to take the time necessary to review all relevant policies related to ethical behavior to ensure they remain in compliance while enrolled in the MSW program. Students who violate university student codes of conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics may be referred to a Student Status Review (SSR), which can result in a range of remedies depending on the violation.

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

Cal State Fullerton is comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The University takes pride in being a culturally diverse campus that promotes equal opportunity. It is essential that the entire University community recognize the need for an awareness of, sensitivity to and respect for the cultural heritage, gender and sexual orientation of others. Individual(s) or group(s) actions or activities that promote degrading or demeaning social stereotypes based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual

orientation or veteran status will not be tolerated. Students who behave abusively toward members of the University community based on the aforementioned criteria will face serious consequences and will be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who commits acts of discrimination, harassment or retaliation manifested by acts or threats of physical abuse, verbal abuse and/or hazing activities may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the University.

View CSU's [Statement of Values](#) and CSU's [Nondiscrimination Policy and Complaint Procedures](#)

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment is prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, the California Fair Employment and Housing Act, as well as under CSU Executive Order 345. California State University, Fullerton is committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which faculty, staff, and students work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect and unconstrained academic interchange. In the university environment, all faculty, staff, and students are entitled to be treated on the basis of their qualifications, competence, and accomplishments without regard to gender. Individuals are entitled to benefit from university programs and activities without being discriminated against on the basis of their sex. Sexual harassment violates university policy, seriously threatens the academic environment, and is illegal. The policy on campus is to eliminate sexual harassment and to provide prompt and equitable relief to the extent possible.

Sexual harassment includes such behavior as sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature directed toward an employee, student, or applicant when one or more of the following circumstances are present:

1. Submission to or toleration of the conduct is an explicit or implicit term or condition of appointment, employment, admission, or academic evaluation;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for a personnel decision or an academic evaluation affecting an individual;
3. The conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a student's academic performance, creating an intimidating, hostile, offensive or otherwise adverse learning environment, or adversely affecting any student.

At CSUF, all matters of harassment are referred to the [Title IX and Gender Equity Office](#). Title IX requires the university to designate a Title IX Coordinator to monitor and oversee overall Title IX compliance. The campus Title IX Coordinator is available to explain and discuss your right to file a criminal complaint; the [university's complaint process](#), including the investigation process; how confidentiality is handled; available resources, both on and off campus; and other



related matters. If you are experiencing an emergency, please call the police immediately by dialing 9-1-1.

Any student believing to be harassed should report incident(s) to the Department Chair, their academic advisor, or other faculty member. Title IX policies will be adhered to in terms of reporting structure. Substantiated charges of harassment by a student may result in dismissal from the program. In addition, Chair, advisor, or faculty member may assist students with reporting the alleged misconduct/violation of the Student Conduct Code to the Dean of Students.

If you report being a victim of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you were a CSUF student, federal and state education laws require that your instructor notifies the Campus Title IX Coordinator. You will be contacted to let you know about your rights and options as a survivor and support services at CSUF, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you.

If You Believe You Have Been Sexually Harassed and/or Harassed:

1. Understand that it is not your fault
2. Do not be intimidated by a threat of retaliation to you or a family member

Read the CSU Chancellor's Office [Title IX policies](#).

Read CSUF's [Sexual Harassment Reporting Options and Process](#).

### ***Bullying, Harassment, Intimidation***

The department does not tolerate bullying, harassment or intentional intimidation of any type. Students who are discovered to have engaged in bullying or harassment will be immediately referred to a Student Status Review (SSR) and/or the university Office of Student Conduct for possible disciplinary action.

Examples of bullying and harassment may include:

1. Continued gossiping about another student;
2. Confronting a student about a concern in an aggressive manner;
3. Posting derogatory information about another member of the department (student, faculty, staff) on social media.
4. Behaving in a disrespectful manner with a person of authority (i.e., in the classroom, during an academic advising meeting, in an ASM, SSR hearing).

Disrespectful behavior is also defined in the NASW Code of Ethics 2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues, which students agree to follow upon acceptance to the program.

### *Academic Dishonesty*

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. The University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles and in so doing will protect the integrity of all academic work and student grades. Students are expected to do all work assigned to them without unauthorized assistance and are not to give unauthorized assistance. Faculty members have the responsibility of exercising care in the planning and supervision of academic work so that honest effort will be positively encouraged.

Academic dishonesty is a broad category of actions that use fraud and deception to improve a grade or obtain course credit. Academic dishonesty is not limited to examinations alone, but arises whenever students attempt to gain an unearned academic advantage. **Plagiarism** is a specific form of academic dishonesty (cheating) which consists of handing in someone else's work, copying or purchasing a composition, using ideas, paragraphs, sentences, or phrases written by another, or using data and/or statistics compiled by another without giving citation. Another example of academic dishonesty is submission of the same, or essentially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in two different courses without receiving prior approval. A faculty member who is convinced by the evidence that a student is guilty of academic dishonesty shall assign an appropriate academic penalty ranging from an oral reprimand to an F in the course. In addition to notifying the student, the faculty member shall also notify the Department Chair, and the Dean of Students.

The Social Work Program strictly adheres to the [University's policy on Academic Dishonesty](#) and [Title 5 Student Code of Conduct](#). Students should become familiar with this policy and address any questions to their advisor. Failure to comply with the policy may lead to suspension or expulsion from the University.

Examples of academic dishonesty may include (but are not limited to) final or draft assignments submitted for review that include:

1. Copying and pasting any portion of another's work
2. Including another's work, either by including a quotation or paraphrasing and omitting proper citation, or engaging in a practice of including incorrect citations (i.e., placing a citation after a content that is not where the information was derived)
3. Submitting an assignment that consists of more than 20% quotations
4. Using a "ghostwriter" (someone who heavily edits a student's work)
5. Uses AI to substantially contribute to the completion of an assignment

## ***Student Conduct Code***

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Each member of the campus community should choose behaviors that contribute toward this end. Students are expected to be good citizens and to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon their university, to be civil to one another and to others in the campus community and contribute positively to student and university life.

Student behavior that is not consistent with the [Student Conduct Code](#) is addressed through an educational process that is designed to promote safety and good citizenship and, when necessary, impose appropriate consequences. (See department policies on conflict resolution above).

## ***Classroom Misconduct***

Instructors are responsible for setting both the academic and behavioral standards for their courses. Students are expected to comply with established class standards as well as the [Student Conduct Code](#). Students who display disruptive, threatening, or abusive behavior in class are subject to discipline and may be referred for a Student Status Review Committee (SSRC) and/or to the Dean of Students Office. Faculty may eject a student from a single class session when necessary to end seriously disruptive or threatening behavior. Such actions will be reported to the appropriate campus officials. (See department policies on student conduct above).

## ***Students with Disabilities***

Students with documented disabilities may request reasonable accommodations for their classes and/or field placement through the [Disability Support Services](#) (DSS). Students with documented disabilities are advised to register with DSS upon entering the program so that they may take full advantage of the support and services offered by CSUF. These services include, but are not limited to, note taking/transcribing services, exam proctoring, and mobility assistance.

Faculty will receive a confidential list of students who have received DSS-approved accommodations, but they will not receive detailed information about the nature of the disability. It is the student's responsibility to articulate to the instructor what accommodations are needed. Students are highly encouraged to request accommodations early since some disabilities must be supported by provider documentation.

Students should not provide instructors “doctor’s notes” as evidence for an absence. If an illness or other disability (as defined in the ADA) requires that students miss several class meetings, students are encouraged to consult with DSS.

Students who may need an accommodation in their field placement should identify this need on the MSW Field Education Application and with their Field Director so that reasonable accommodations can be facilitated in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to take charge of how they present their disability to the prospective placement agency, especially if reasonable accommodations are required. Per the DSS and the ADA, agencies are not required to provide accommodations for students if the accommodation compromises client care.

### ***Alcohol and Illicit Drug Policy Information***

Consistent with its mission of enabling students to reach their educational goals, CSUF is committed to creating a campus environment that is free from both the illegal and harmful use of alcohol and drugs.

It is the policy of CSUF that the manufacture, possession, distribution, sale, or use of alcohol or illicit drugs on-campus, or off-campus while on University business or participating in university sponsored functions, is prohibited. (Note: This includes NASW Legislative Lobby Days).

The purpose of this policy is to delineate University regulations concerning alcohol and drugs, provide procedural guidelines, communicate the consequences of failing to adhere to established policies, and provide guidance as to available resources.

View CSUF’s [Policy on Alcohol and Drug Use](#).

### ***Smoke, and Tobacco-Free Campus Policy Information***

CSUF became the [first CSU smoke-free campus](#) in August 2013. CSUF implemented this policy to promote the health, wellbeing, and safety of our employees, students, and visitors, to establish a smoke and tobacco-free environment and to encourage non-smoking and tobacco-free lifestyles.

View [CSU’s Smoke-and Tobacco-Free Policies](#)

### ***Enrollment in Classes***

Students must be enrolled in all required courses prior to the first day of the semester. Please adhere to all Admissions and Records tuition payment deadlines to avoid being dis-enrolled

from classes. Students who do not enroll in their classes prior to the first day of the semester may not be able to attend classes and/or internship and may be terminated from the program.

### ***Grade Appeals***

The University considers all grades reported at the end of each semester to be final. Students are responsible for reviewing their grades for accuracy before the end of the subsequent semester. Students who believe they have received a grade in error should promptly ask the instructor to verify and, if appropriate, correct the grade. Students should also follow department guidelines on appealing a grade. If that fails to resolve the issue satisfactorily, students can utilize the university grade appeal process. For more information, please refer to the University [Grade Changes Policy](#).

### ***Grades of Incomplete***

Students may be granted an incomplete grade “I” when a portion of required coursework has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen but fully justified reasons, and that a substantial portion of the course requirement has been completed with a passing grade and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. The work that is incomplete normally should be of such a nature that can be completed independently by the student for later evaluation by the instructor.

An Incomplete shall not be assigned when a student would be required to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. Students must have a passing grade in the course at the time of the request to be eligible for an incomplete.

It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor and to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the agreed-upon work has been completed and evaluated.

An “I” must normally be made up within one calendar year immediately following the end of the term during that it was assigned, unless otherwise stipulated in the contract between the student, instructor and department chair. This limitation prevails whether the student maintains continuous enrollment.

Students who believe they meet the necessary conditions to be assigned an Incomplete should contact their instructor. The instructor can then complete a [Statement of Requirements of Completion of Coursework](#) on the Registrar’s Office website.

View CSUF’s [Policy on Incomplete Grade](#).

All requests for Incompletes must be approved by the instructor of record and the Department Chair. Students requesting an incomplete must report this request to the instructor and their academic advisor who will guide the student in completing the required paperwork.

## **STUDENT SUPPORT AND REVIEW**

Students are supported in the program in several ways. Students who are struggling should reach out to the appropriate person, depending on the specifics of the situation. The following programs and policies are designed to provide students with structured methods for guidance and support.

### **Conflict Resolution Policy**

The department embraces a collaborative model for conflict resolution. If a student has a conflict with anyone in the department (another student, faculty member or staff member), they have a right to resolve the conflict in a way that is respectful and safe. If they have a conflict with a faculty member, they have a right to resolve the conflict in a way that addresses the faculty-student power differential. Additional information on conflict resolution strategies can be found on the university Conflict Resolution Services [website](#).

Students are encouraged to first discuss their concerns with the individual in a collaborative manner, prior to reaching out to another person to resolve the conflict. Respectful behavior toward others is also defined in the *NASW Code of Ethics 2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues*, which students agree to follow upon acceptance to the program. Students must also abide by the university code of conduct.

Examples of non-collaborative “conflict resolution strategies” include (but are not limited to) emailing university leadership to complain about a grade on an assignment (or a similar grievance) prior to contacting the instructor, academic advisor and/or department chair, gossiping to fellow students about another student, posting complaints on social media. Students who are experiencing a conflict in the department are encouraged to seek guidance from their academic advisor.

Examples of common situations that may be appropriate for conflict resolution include:

1. A student has a concern about a grade they received on their assignment.  
Collaborative response: reach out to the faculty member to directly discuss their concern. If this attempt fails to result in an acceptable solution, the student can then follow department policy on disputing the grade or seek support from the Department Chair, as appropriate.

2. A student (or group of students) has a concern with a group member in a course who isn't contributing as much as other group members. Collaborative response: reach out to the student and express concerns in an attempt to explore acceptable solutions. If an acceptable solution cannot be achieved, involved students will be guided toward additional options.
3. A student is upset about a department policy and/or decision, such as the inability to complete their field education hours on weekends, not being able to register for their preferred sections, not being able to attend the hooding ceremony despite having outstanding coursework to complete. A collaborative response: Address their concerns in a respectful manner with each level of decision-makers, prior to emailing university leadership.

Mechanism for initiating a conflict resolution meeting:

1. The student will notify their academic advisor via email of the conflict they're experiencing.
2. The academic advisor will determine whether a conflict resolution meeting is appropriate, and if so, will set up a conflict resolution meeting.
3. All parties will be encouraged to attend, with the academic advisor (and/or other faculty member not involved in the conflict) in attendance as well.
4. Each party will have an opportunity to share their concerns without interruption.
5. Each party will have an opportunity to respond to concerns presented to them without interruption.
6. The academic advisor and/or faculty member will facilitate a collaborative discussion using a strengths-based approach, focusing on positive solutions.
7. The goal of the conflict resolution meeting will be to arrive at a mutually-agreed upon solution, with a timeline for implementation.
8. If the conflict persists after the meeting, the student can reach out to their academic advisor for further support.
9. Engagement in a conflict resolution is highly encouraged, voluntary and nonbinding.

### **Student Grievance Policy**

Students may submit a written complaint to the Department Chair for investigation. The complaint should be in writing, and include all pertinent facts related to the complaint. Only those facts stated in the complaint will be considered. The Chair's review will be completed within 14 days. The complaint will be dismissed if the Chair determines no probable cause exists for the allegation, or the Chair will refer the complaint to a department investigative committee. After reviewing the report and recommendation of the department investigation committee, the Chair may uphold the committee's recommendation, refer the matter to the College Dean, or dismiss the complaint.

## **Academic Support Meeting**

### ***Preamble***

An Academic Support Meeting (ASM) is designed to facilitate student success whereby students who are academically or behaviorally at risk are linked with valuable campus support networks through meeting with their academic advisor. In an ASM, students work collaboratively with their academic advisor and faculty members (as needed) to develop and implement an academic success plan. Students may request an ASM at any time they feel they would benefit from developing an academic support plan with their academic advisor and/or faculty member(s).

Faculty members may request an ASM for students in their class when a student demonstrates a pattern of difficulty with timeliness or completeness of assignments, demonstrates risk of academic failure, demonstrates difficulty accessing or understanding course content, exhibits unsatisfactory class attendance, or exhibits behavioral difficulties within the classroom/learning environment, outside the classroom, or with their field placement. An ASM may also be called by a student, a student's academic advisor or the department chair when students demonstrate the need for additional campus resources and support services. Students who consistently do not check their Fullerton email account and/or fail to meet required deadlines may be referred for an ASM.

### ***Procedure***

Faculty members may formally initiate a request for an Academic Support Meeting (ASM) by informing the student and their academic advisor in writing through electronic mail. The ASM request should clearly state the instructor's specific area(s) of concern so that these may be addressed during the ASM. Once the ASM request has been made, the student is allotted seven calendar days in which they need to contact their advisor and set a meeting time. Meeting times are to be scheduled at the convenience of the academic advisor. Failure on the part of the student to contact their advisor within this time frame will result in referral of the student to the Student Status Review Committee for hearing. Attendance at the ASM is required.

Students may request an ASM by emailing their academic advisor and clearly stating the areas in which they are needing academic support, campus resources or professional guidance.

During the ASM, the student and academic advisor will develop a *plan of action* to address the faculty member's concern(s). While each student's plan of action is individualized, components of the plan of action may include such action steps as referral to campus academic support resources, attending academic skill building workshops, referral to a campus librarian for assistance as well as a variety of other options as indicated by the student's areas of difficulty. The plan of action is a formal document that can be referenced by both the student and academic advisor and can be adjusted as the team deems appropriate.



Once the plan of action is complete, it is the student's responsibility to inform their instructor of the contents of this plan and to implement the plan of action according to their agreement with the academic advisor. Both the instructor and academic advisor may monitor the student's progress on the plan of action as they deem appropriate. Failure on the part of the student to adhere to the steps outlined in the action plan may result in referral to the Student Status Review Committee for a formal hearing.

## **Student Status Review**

### ***Preamble***

The Student Status Review is the process by which the Social Work Program addresses student performance and conduct problems. The Student Status Review Committee (SSRC) is charged by the faculty of the Department of Social Work with responsibility for the administrative review of any student's academic activities, clinical performance, or behavior that violates appropriate expectations in the classroom or field education setting, or that violates the values and ethics and/or expectations of the profession.

Social work students are expected to establish and maintain professional relationships at all levels, both within and outside the classroom (with faculty, staff and students; with individual clients, groups, the community, and others). This entails, among other things, adhering to standards of academic honesty; engaging in appropriate, professional behavior in both academic and clinical settings; respecting self and others; and being able to communicate in ways that are non-exploitative of others. Moreover, social work students are expected to adhere to the values and standards of the social work profession as exemplified in the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

The Student Status Review Committee is a standing committee of the Department of Social Work. To properly discharge its responsibilities and authority, the Student Status Review Committee will be representative of the faculty and shall be constituted of three (3) full time faculty members (and alternates). Members of the faculty shall elect the Chair of the Committee. These faculty representatives will be responsible for conducting hearings. Decisions made will require a simple majority vote of the Committee. Minutes of hearings and Committee decisions will be forwarded to the Department Chair within 10 working days of the hearing. Students may obtain copies of the meeting minutes by making a formal request to the Committee Chair in writing. Copies will be made available to the student to pick up from the Social Work Department Office.

The student may appeal the SSRC's decision to the Department Chair. Upon receipt of the SSRC's decision and the minutes of the hearing or an appeal from the student, the Department

Chair will act upon the matter and implement the decision. The Department Chair will communicate this decision to the student and the SSRC.

To prepare for the SSRC meeting, students are encouraged to meet with their academic advisor to assist with the development of a corrective plan of action. It is the responsibility of the student to contact their academic advisor and facilitate the meeting. Corrective action plans must address the specific concerns of the SSRC and provide action items the student will take (which can include a variety of options such as using campus resources, engaging in additional trainings, etc.) as well as stipulate the time frame in which these actions are to be completed. The SSRC will review this plan during the meeting and shall be allowed to make appropriate changes. The student is expected to come to the SSRC meeting with a corrective action plan developed.

### ***General Guidelines***

The student status review process may be initiated by a) the student, b) the student's faculty advisor, or c) any faculty member concerned about the student's status.

A faculty member who initiates the review and who serves on the SSRC shall be temporarily replaced by an alternate and shall not vote on the matter before the Committee. Likewise, if the faculty member initiating the review serves as the student's academic advisor, the student will be provided with an alternate faculty member to serve as their advisor throughout the proceedings.

Anyone initiating the Student Status Review process must make the request to the Chair of the SSRC in writing.

Student performance and behavior may be reviewed by the SSRC in the following circumstances:

1. The student fails to correct deficits in their academic performance as stipulated in prior Special Advisement agreements or Academic Support Meetings.
2. The student receives a grade that is not considered passing for that course.
3. The student is dismissed from their field placement.
4. The student's GPA for courses in the Social Work Program drops below a 3.0, the student is at risk of being placed on academic notice (formerly academic probation) by the Graduate Studies Office, or the student is in danger of not completing their coursework as outlined in their Plan of Study.
5. The student violates University standards of academic integrity.
6. Student is in receipt of a scholarship or stipend that is put in jeopardy by the student's unprofessional behavior or academic performance.
7. Faculty concern over attitudinal, behavioral or ethical considerations that question the student's fitness for the profession of social work. This involves maintaining social functioning that allows for effective participation in the academic and field education

- requirements of the program. Social functioning refers to the student's ability to cope with the demands generated by their interaction with their environment.
8. Impairment in social functioning and/or occupational functioning may be exhibited by a single discrete episode that clearly violates the University's expectations for student conduct or the NASW Code of Ethics, state regulations defining professional misconduct, or by a pattern of recurring behavior which may include, but not limited to the following:
    - A. Consistently unable or unwilling to carry out departmental or field practicum responsibilities.
    - B. Presents frequent personal crises such that tasks, assignments, tests, appointments and field practicum activities are not completed in a timely manner and/or require rescheduling.
    - C. Exhibits provocative behavior such that the behavior alienates the student from others, disrupts class or meetings or the flow of work in the field agency or results in repeated complaints from the field education instructor, students, faculty, or others in the academic or practicum environment or related agencies.
    - D. Frequent misinterpretation or misrepresentation of others' communications or behaviors.
    - E. Displays frequent attention-seeking or other inappropriate behavior, which disrupts the academic or field education environment.
    - F. Displays erratic, disorganized, incoherent, or unpredictable behavior.
    - G. Lacks insight or is unable to perceive the negative consequences of own behavior.
    - H. Frequently blames others or external factors for failures and difficulties in the academic or field practicum environment.
    - I. Takes the position that there is justification for having hurt or mistreated another person.
    - J. Repeatedly fails to plan ahead or is impulsive, causing distress, disruption, or harm to others.
    - K. Is verbally or physically aggressive toward others.
    - L. Is disoriented to person, place, or time, such that the school or practicum responsibilities cannot be carried out.
    - M. Is unable to sustain harmonious school and practicum relationships as exhibited by recurring interpersonal conflicts.
    - N. Displays intoxication or impairment at the University or field agency, due to abuse of alcohol or a psychoactive substance or misuse of prescription medication.
    - O. Displays behavior that results in a consensus among faculty and/or practicum personnel that the student would present a clear threat to others upon entering

the profession of social work practice.

- P. Commits an act that violates state or federal law and compromises the student's fitness for the profession of social work.
- Q. Engages in unprofessional or inappropriate behaviors within their practicum, classroom, or community, including private conduct (see [NASW Code of Ethics Section 4.03](#)), that intentionally or unintentionally put clients at risk or violates client's rights as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics and/or field agency policies.
- R. Engages in unprofessional or inappropriate behaviors through social media or other electronic means, including private conduct (see NASW Code of Ethics Section 4.03) that intentionally or unintentionally put clients at risk or violate client's rights as specified by the NASW Code of Ethics and/or field agency policies.
- S. Unacceptable performance in the areas of humanistic attitudes, beliefs, and values is grounds for student status review, especially when another's right to self-determination and dignity is infringed upon, and includes the following:
  - T. Inability to tolerate different points of view such that it affects classroom or practicum performance of the student or others.
  - U. Lack of flexibility in attitudes toward race, culture, ethnicity, age, physical or mental abilities, gender (including the roles of males and females), sexual orientation, religion, or other human diversities such that it affects classroom or practicum performance or impinges on the right of others.
- V. Not allowing clients the opportunity to make their own choices and experience the consequences of such choices (appropriate exceptions noted regarding minors or when severity of consequences is unacceptable such as in the case of suicidal behavior).

Nothing in these standards shall contradict the standards concerning child abuse and neglect, or threats to self or others according to local, state, and federal statutes. Standards for students apply to practicum settings, the academic environment and the professional community.

The SSRC will include in its deliberations all available information relating to student performance, including academic performance, attitudinal or ethical considerations, and personal circumstances that affect academic performance.

The SSRC may recommend the following actions:

1. Dismissal from the Social Work Program
2. Failing grade assigned in a course
3. Academic notice

4. Administrative-Academic notice
5. Interventions and/or a corrective action plan to be followed by the student.
6. The student is placed on administrative leave for up to one year
7. Formal warning
8. Proceed without Academic notice, Administrative-Academic notice, or warning

The SSRC decision, for all actions except dismissal from the program and proceeding without any actions, will include a procedure for evaluating student progress and continuing in the MSW program. For example, students may be asked to meet with their academic advisor before returning to the program from a leave or may be asked to submit evidence of professional/personal growth and reflection to the academic advisor or the SSRC.

### ***Dismissal from the Program***

The SSRC may recommend dismissal from the Program for students whose academic, classroom, or practicum performance is judged to be unacceptable.

A student who fails to satisfy conditions of probation in a timely fashion will be dismissed.

A student will be dismissed when their performance in the classroom or in the practicum setting is inconsistent with the spirit and the letter of the NASW Code of Ethics in situations in which ethical judgment is to be exercised and professional intervention or professional conduct is required.

### ***Academic Notice***

Stipulations herein delineated reflect minimum standards of academic performance in professional social work courses that may exceed University rules and regulations on semester and cumulative GPA.

Criteria for academic notice/administrative-academic notice (see [Graduate Studies Policies and Procedures](#)):

These criteria are not intended to exhaust all ways a student might be placed on academic notice/administrative-academic notice.

1. Any student may be placed on administrative-academic notice whose performance and/or professional development is judged to be inadequate (e.g., not consistently progressing toward completion of the degree).
2. Any student who earns a grade below a C in a core social work course shall be considered failing in that course and placed on academic notice.
3. A student may be placed on administrative-academic notice when they display attitudes, behaviors or lack of judgment which cause disruption in the academic or

clinical setting or poses potential risk to the well-being of the student or the student's clients.

### ***Duration of Academic Notice/Administrative-Academic Notice***

The duration of academic notice will be at the discretion of the SSRC where there are no set University rules and regulations. A student cannot graduate from the program while on academic notice.

### ***Required Student Performance***

The SSRC will delineate specific expectations for student performance while on academic notice/administrative-academic notice. At the conclusion of the stated period the SSRC will review the student's performance and make one of the following decisions:

1. Remove from administrative-academic notice
2. Continue administrative-academic notice
3. Dismiss from the program. A recommendation to dismiss will require a simple majority of voting members of the SSRC.

### ***Intervention/Corrective Action Plan***

Interventions or corrective action plans designed by the SSRC are intended to provide an opportunity for students to succeed academically in the MSW program and/or develop clinical and personal skills to be a successful professional social worker. Thus, the SSRC may recommend interventions that would facilitate student growth. Examples might include referral to the [University Learning Center](#); an additional field placement and/or extended placement; regular meetings with the academic advisor; medical or psychiatric evaluation, delay of their field placement, etc.

### ***Administrative Leave***

Administrative leave may be instituted for up to one academic year. This process is overseen by the Office of Graduate Studies and will be administered in accordance with their guidelines.

### ***Formal Warning***

A formal written warning will be placed in the student's departmental file for their duration of the enrollment in the program. If after receiving a formal warning, any additional concerns are raised by faculty regarding the student's behavior or academic performance at any point in time during the student's enrollment in the program an immediate SSR meeting will be held.

## ***SSR Procedures***

1. A written request for a student status review with supporting material must be made to the Chair of the Student Status Review Committee. Such request must specify student performance or conduct that necessitates review of the student's status.
2. The Chair of the SSRC will forward the request and supporting material to members of the Committee.
3. Within one (1) week, members of the SSRC will review the request and determine if the issues meet requisite conditions for student status review. If the matter falls within the purview of the SSRC, the Committee will set a date for the student status review.
4. The SSRC will notify the student in writing and include the original request for an SSR. The notification shall specify the alleged deficiencies in performance or conduct; and the date, time, and location of the review.
5. The notification shall also specify that the student has the right to contact their academic advisor who will be available to assist the student in preparing for the SSRC meeting.
6. The notification shall be delivered to the student in person or via electronic mail through their university account. The notification shall also be sent to the student's academic advisor, and the Department Chair.
7. Once scheduled, SSR hearing will be held with or without the student in attendance.
8. The person initiating the request for a Student Status Review may request that such review be canceled or discontinued by submitting a written request to the Chair of the SSRC giving reasons for the request. Upon receipt of the request for cancellation, the Chair of the SSRC shall poll members to determine whether cancellation is appropriate. Such request shall be made as early as practical.
9. The person initiating the review must be present during the Student Status Review meeting.
10. A student shall have the right to present data that challenge the allegations necessitating this review.
11. A student may ask others to address the SSRC on their behalf.
12. The student and their academic advisor should assess what kind of information other participants will bring to the SSR meeting; information should be specifically related to the reasons for the SSR meeting.
13. Those addressing the SSRC on the student's behalf will not participate in the entire SSR meeting but will be invited in by the SSRC to speak and then be excused. This process will be guided in the meeting by the chair (or designee) of the SSRC.
14. A student shall be able to question anyone participating in the proceedings during the meeting.
15. The student shall have the right to ask for a break or a brief consultation with their academic advisor at any point during the hearing.

16. The procedures for Student Status Review Committee hearing include the following:
- Call to order
  - Roll call of participants
  - Verification of presence of Committee members
  - Verification of presence of student
  - Verification of presence of individual requesting the review of the student
  - Verification of presence of student's academic advisor
  - Verification of presence of student's invitees (if student has invited others to address the Committee)
  - Verification of due notice to student
  - Disposition of procedural questions, if any
  - The Hearing:
    1. Statement of the circumstances necessitating this review
    2. Presentation of the Program's evidence
    3. Statement by the student (if the student desires)
    4. Presentation of student evidence
    5. Review of student's corrective action plan
    6. Statements of invitees speaking on student's behalf
    7. Committee questions to the student regarding statements and evidence presented in the hearing
    8. Additional statement by the student (if the student desires)
    9. Student and academic advisor are dismissed.
    10. Executive session to review facts and determine decision
17. The Chair shall make the procedures for the meeting available to all participants.
18. An appointed secretary will take minutes of the Student Status Review proceedings. The student will be advised during the student status review process of their right to obtain a copy of the minutes. It is the student's responsibility to obtain a copy of the minutes.
19. The Student Status Review meeting will be audio recorded by the recording secretary. Meetings held over zoom or other video conference platforms will be recorded. Recordings will be stored confidentially in the Department of Social Work office. No other recording of the meeting is permitted. Recordings are made for the purposes of creating accurate minutes, not for distribution to students or other parties.
20. The Chair will notify the student in writing of the Committee's decision within ten working days following the hearing. Notification shall be delivered to the student in person or via e-mail. A copy of the SSRC decision will be sent to the student at their address they have listed with the university by registered mail, specifying receipt requested.
21. The Chair will submit signed minutes and the Committee's decision to the Department Chair within fifteen working days following the hearing. Corrections to



- the minutes shall be made within five working days from Department Chair's receipt of the minutes.
22. Students may appeal the Committee's decision to the Department Chair within five working days after receiving notification of the decision. The appeal must be in writing.
  23. The Department Chair will act upon the Committee's decision and/or the student's appeal and implement their disposition of the matter within ten working days of receipt of the decision and/or the student's appeal.
  24. The student may appeal an adverse decision in the manner prescribed by the University.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the contents of this handbook. Students who have questions that are not addressed in this handbook are encouraged to reach out to the Department Chair, the Department Coordinator and/or their academic advisor.