



**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

MSW Student Handbook 2021-2022

Master of Social Work 2020-2021 Student Handbook

(Revised Summer 2017, Spring 2018, Summer 2018, Fall 2019, Fall 2020, June 2021)
Applicable to all MSW students who are enrolled during the 2021-2022 Academic Year

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Purpose of MSW Student Handbook

The purpose of the MSW Student Handbook is to provide information on the Social Work Program at Valdosta State University and the requirements of the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. This handbook supplements the Valdosta State University Graduate Catalog and will be a useful reference guide for academic and campus policies and procedures as you complete your MSW at Valdosta State University. Please note that there is a separate MSW Field Practicum Manual that addresses policies and procedures pertaining to the field practicum. Both manuals provide information that you will need as you complete your MSW.

SECTION 1: ABOUT VALDOSTA UNIVERSITY

Valdosta State University Mission

As a comprehensive institution of the University System of Georgia, Valdosta State University (VSU) is a welcoming, aware, and vibrant community founded on and dedicated to serving our communities' rich and diverse heritages. Through excellence in teaching, basic and applied research, and service, VSU provides rigorous programs and opportunities that enrich our students, our university, and our region. As such, the VSU mission consists of three interrelated parts:

1. Student Mission: To provide a diverse student population with an inspired education, a safe learning environment, a nurturing community, and a wealth of experience that assists students in molding their futures in a creative, conscious, and caring fashion while preparing them to be lifelong learners who will meet the needs of a changing global society.
2. University Mission: To operate the university with a focus toward human, environmental, and financial sustainability while increasing value to our local, regional, national, and international stakeholders. To expand opportunities for our students, employees, and varied community members by promoting social justice and service learning.
3. Regional Mission: To provide our region and our home with the resources and support necessary to develop and sustain a higher quality of living, greater economic and community development, and inspired innovation that nurtures and respects our diverse population and beautiful environment while promoting academic outreach, public and private entrepreneurship, and collaboration with all regional entities (<https://www.valdosta.edu/strategicplan/mission.php>).

Valdosta State University fulfills its mission by focusing on inclusion in all aspects of the educational experience.

Valdosta State University Vision and Strategic Plan

The vision of VSU is to be a catalyst for regional comprehensive progress and the Strategic Plan rolled out in Spring 2018 included objectives to support this vision through: (1) Increasing the number of VSU graduates (2) Facilitating experiential learning opportunities for VSU students (3) Enhancing VSU's impact in the region (<https://www.valdosta.edu/strategicplan/>).

College of Education and Human Services

The MSW program is unit in the Department of Human Services located within the James L Dewar & Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education & Human Services. The mission of the Dewar College of Education & Human Services (COEHS) is to prepare professionals for multiple roles in 21st century educational, business, and community settings. COEHS graduates use theory, research, evidence-based practice, and collaboration for the improvement of the health, well-being, and education of diverse citizens in our region, the nation, and the world (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/deans-office/>).

SECTION 2: THE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Overview of the Social Work Program

The VSU Social Work Program is an organizational unit within the Department of Human Services in the James L. and Dorothy H. Dewar College of Education & Human Services, and it offers a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree that can be completed full-time or part-time. The MSW Program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and is designed to prepare students for a career in professional social work practice (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/human-services/social-work/>). Since 1995, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) has accredited the Master of Social Work program. CSWE sets the guidelines and policies for all accredited social work programs. The Social Work Program faculty offices and classrooms are located on the second floor of Converse Hall on the Main Campus of Valdosta State University.

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MSW Program's Mission Statement

The mission of the Department of Social Work is to promote a diverse and accepting learning community and professional culture which includes students, faculty, staff, and community stakeholders at local, regional, state, national and international levels. Via teaching, scholarship, service, advocacy and leadership we strive to: improve individual well-being and social welfare with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of populations that are oppressed, vulnerable, and living in poverty; advance social and environmental justice; advocate for human rights; and promote respect for human differences. Further, through field and other educational experiences, we prepare advanced generalist practitioners who engage in ethical and culturally sensitive practice that is informed by theory, research, and practice wisdom. Through supervision, consultation, and professional collaboration, these practitioners learn to critically evaluate, shape, and be shaped by the social work practice environment.

MSW Program Goals

The MSW Program goals have been modified over time to reflect changes in the profession of social work as well as changes in the practice environment. These are the goals of the department, which are distinct from the competencies, which are goals for students. The seven goals of the Social Work Program are as follows:

1. To prepare and graduate advanced generalist social workers who employ proactive, reflective, responsive and evidence based and accepted social work practice methods with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. To prepare and graduate students to practice from a value-oriented, strength-based perspective that addresses issues of oppression, poverty, diversity and inclusion.
3. To prepare and graduate students to advocate for human rights, social, economic and environmental justice, at local, national, and global levels.
4. To graduate students whose practice is based on a firm grounding in social work values and a strong professional social work identity
5. To ensure the values, knowledge and skills of our graduates are congruent with the continually changing practice environment; changes which includes both advances in social work knowledge and practices as well as the changing milieu of local, state, national, and international communities.
6. To facilitate growth of the program to meet the needs of client systems, expand diversity and international perspectives, increase global connections and understanding
7. To acknowledge, reflect and act on our changing milieu to stay current in meeting the needs of our students and community.

MSW Competencies

In line with the 2015 Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), social work faculty have identified nine (9) foundation curriculum objectives, nine (9) concentration curriculum objectives. In defining the 9 foundation objectives, we believe that students cannot master the foundation objectives by the end of their foundation year, and therefore, must continue to learn their program objectives

with advanced breadth and depth, and should be able to the demonstration of more advanced knowledge and skills. Thus, during students' concentration year, all 9 program objectives must be met. MSW Foundation Program objectives are as follows:

Generalist Competencies

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
- Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- Competency 4: Engage in Advanced Forms of Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Advanced 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

Advanced Competencies

- Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior at an advanced level.
- Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice at an advanced level.
- Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice Concerns at an advanced level.
- Competency 4: Engage in Advanced Forms of Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice
- Competency 5: Engage in Advanced Policy Practice.
- Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level.
- Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level.
- Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level.
- Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities at an Advanced Level.

MSW Curriculum

The MSW curriculum is designed to assist students with developing the core competencies set out by CSWE to guide accredited social work training programs. Generalist Competencies are addressed in 6000 level courses and Advanced Competencies are addressed in the 7000 level courses. In addition, at least two electives (for a minimum of five hours) are required for graduation. Elective courses are available to MSW students who:

1. Completed the required generalist coursework including SOWK 6201, 6301, 6202, and 6303.
2. Are Advanced Generalist and Advanced Standing students.
3. Enter the MSW Program with another graduate degree in a related field and make this request.

The content of the courses you will take while in the program will help you develop the identified competencies. The advanced generalist curriculum provides students with the knowledge, values, ethics, and skills to engage in multi-level practice with individuals, families, organizations, and communities. A full list of MSW courses and electives offered in the VSU Social Work Program for each option is available on page 10 in the sample Program of Study and in the VSU Graduate Catalog <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/graduate-degree-programs/education-human-services/human-services/master-social-work/>.

MSW Program Options

Students have three main ways to earn their MSW at VSU:

Students are admitted to one of the following cohort options:

1. On-Campus: Full-Time (2-years) or Part-Time (3- or 4-years)
2. Web Hybrid (3-years) including 5 weekends of on-campus classes each semester
3. Advanced Standing: On-Campus or Web Hybrid: Full-Time (1-year) or Part-Time (2-years)

On-Campus Option

The On-Campus option is a 2 year full-time 60 credit hour program offered in the evenings after 5 pm on the Valdosta State University campus. The traditional face-to-face classroom environment is enhanced by Web technology. Two separate yearlong field practicums are required. A part-time version of this program is available over 3 to 4 years face-to-face.

Web-Hybrid Option

The Web-Hybrid option is a three or four-year program that combines online classes and required on-campus classes about one weekend per month from Friday afternoon and all-day Saturday. Students may choose a 3- or 4-year plan to complete their coursework. Two separate yearlong field practicums are required.

Advanced Standing

Students who have received a Bachelor of Social Work degree within the last five years from a CSWE-accredited program and who meet the MSW admission requirements may apply for Advanced Standing (AS) status. Advanced Standing students must complete 33 semester hours and a field practicum over a one-year period for the MSW degree. Advanced Standing students can complete their course work Full-Time On-Campus (1-year); Full-Time Web-Hybrid (1-year); Part-Time On-Campus (2-years); Part-Time Web-Hybrid (2-years). The Web-Hybrid model combines online classes and required on-campus classes about one weekend per month from Friday afternoon and all-day Saturday. (<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/human-services/social-work/students/program-options.php>)

Programs of Study

On Campus 2 - Year Face to Face Full Time (60 Credit Hours)

Year 1 FALL (Generalist Courses – 16 hours)

SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 6201	Human Behavior in Social Environment I	3 hours
SOWK 6301	Generalist Practice I: Individuals & Family	3 hours
SOWK 6303	Practice Skills Lab	2 hours
SOWK 6500	Research & Eval. Methods in SW	3 hours
SOWK 6800	Practicum and Seminar I	4 hours

Year 1 SPRING (Generalist Courses – 15 hours)

SOWK 6004	SW Practice with Groups	2 hours
SOWK 6202	Human Behavior in Social Environment II	3 hours
SOWK 6302	Generalist Practice II: Org. & Comm.	3 hours
SOWK 6400	Social Welfare Policy, Problems, & Services	3 hours
SOWK 6900	Practicum and Seminar II	4 hours

Year 1 SUMMER (Generalist – a minimum of 6 hours)

SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours
ELECTIVE	Optional	2 or 3 hours

Year 2 FALL (Advanced Generalist – a minimum of 9 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm.	3 hours
SOWK 7611	Advanced SW Practicum I	3 hours
ELECTIVE	(if not taken during the summer)	2 or 3 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – a minimum of 9 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Research & Program Evaluation	3 hours
SOWK 7612	Advanced SW Practicum II	3 hours
ELECTIVE	(if not taken during the fall)	2 or 3 hours

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	SW Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

*Some elective courses will be available during the fall and spring semesters.
Students may take electives after completing SOWK 6201, 6202, 6301, 6302, and 6303.*

60 Credits in 2 years

On Campus, Part Time 3 -Year Face to Face

Year 1 FALL (Generalist Courses – 9 hours)

SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 6201	Human Behavior in Social Environment I	3 hours
SOWK 6301	Generalist Practice I: Individuals & Family	3 hours
SOWK 6303	Practice Skills Lab	2 hours

Year 1 SPRING (Generalist Courses – 8 hours)

SOWK 6004	SW Practice with Groups	2 hours
SOWK 6202	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3 hours
SOWK 6302	Generalist Practice II: Org. & Comm.	3 hours

Year 1 SUMMER (ELECTIVES — a minimum of 5 hours) (OPTIONAL)

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives:

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

**Students may take electives after completing SOWK 6201, 6202, 6301, 6302, and 6303. Some elective courses will be available during the fall and spring semesters. Students may choose to take electives in Year 2 Summer.

Year 2 FALL (Generalist – 10 hours)

SOWK 6400	Social Welfare Policy, Problems, and Services	3 hours
SOWK 6500	Research and Evaluation Methods in SW	3 hours
SOWK 6800	Practicum and Seminar I	4 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Generalist – 10 hours)

SOWK 6900	Practicum and Seminar II	4 hours
SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours

Year 2 SUMMER (Electives - 5 hours***)

***Student will need to ensure that a minimum of 5 hours of General Practice Electives have been satisfied prior to becoming an Advanced Generalist student in year 3.

Year 3 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7611 (P)	Advanced SW Practicum I	3 hours

Year 3 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Research & Program Evaluation	3 hours
SOWK 7612 (P)	Advanced SW Practicum II	3 hours

60 Credits in 3 years

On Campus, 4-Year Part Time Face to Face

Year 1 FALL (Generalist Courses – 9 hours)

SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 6201	Human Behavior in Social Environment I	3 hours
SOWK 6301	Generalist Practice I: Individuals & Family	3 hours
SOWK 6303	Practice Skills Lab	2 hours

Year 1 SPRING (Generalist Courses – 8 hours)

SOWK 6004	SW Practice with Groups	2 hours
SOWK 6202	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3 hours
SOWK 6302	Generalist Practice II: Org. & Comm.	3 hours

Year 2 FALL (Generalist – a minimum of 7 hours)

SOWK 6500	Research and Evaluation Methods in SW	3 hours
SOWK 6800	Practicum and Seminar I	3 hours
ELECTIVE	(Optional) 2 or 3 hours	1 hour

Year 2 SPRING (Generalist – 7 hours)

SOWK 6400	Social Welfare Policy, Problems, and Services	3 hours
SOWK 6900	Practicum and Seminar II	3 hours
		1 hour

Year 2 SUMMER (Generalist – a minimum of 6 hours)

SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Year 3 FALL (Advanced Generalist – a minimum of 6 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Year 3 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 6 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Research & Program Evaluation	3 hours

Year 4 FALL (Advanced Generalist – a minimum of 3 hours)

ELECTIVE	(if not taken) 2 or 3 hours	
SOWK 7611 (P)	Advanced SW Practicum I	3 hours

Year 4 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – a minimum of 6)

SOWK 7612 (P)	Advanced Practicum II	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Research and Program Evaluation	3 hours
ELECTIVE	(if not taken) 2 or 3 hours	

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

Students may take electives after completing SOWK 6201, 6202, 6301, 6302, and 6303. Some elective courses will be available during the summer, fall and spring semesters.

60 Credits in 4 years

Web-Hybrid 3-Years

Year 1 FALL (Generalist Courses – 9 hours)

SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 6201	Human Behavior in Social Environment I	3 hours
SOWK 6301	Generalist Practice I: Individuals & Family	3 hours
SOWK 6303	Practice Skills Lab	2 hours

Year 1 SPRING (Generalist Courses – 8 hours)

SOWK 6004	SW Practice with Groups	2 hours
SOWK 6202	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3 hours
SOWK 6302	Generalist Practice II: Org. & Comm.	3 hours

Year 1 SUMMER (ELECTIVES — a minimum of 5 hours)

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives:

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

**Students may take electives after completing SOWK 6201, 6202, 6301, 6302, and 6303. Some elective courses will be available during the fall and spring semesters. Students may choose to take electives in Year 2 Summer.

Year 2 FALL (Generalist – 10 hours)

SOWK 6400	Social Welfare Policy, Problems, and Services	3 hours
SOWK 6500	Research and Evaluation Methods in SW	3 hours
SOWK 6800	Practicum and Seminar I	4 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Generalist – 10 hours)

SOWK 6900	Practicum and Seminar II	4 hours
SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours

Year 2 SUMMER (Electives - 5 hours***)

***Student will need to ensure that a minimum of 5 hours of General Practice Electives have been satisfied prior to becoming an Advanced Generalist student in year 3.

Year 3 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7611 (P)	Advanced SW Practicum I	3 hours

Year 3 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Research & Program Evaluation	3 hours
SOWK 7612 (P)	Advanced SW Practicum II	3 hours

60 Credits in 3 years

Advanced Standing – One Year, On Campus

*A web-hybrid option is also available

Year 1 SUMMER (Advanced Generalist – 8 or 9 hours)

SOWK 6000	Orientation to Advanced Generalist Practice	2 hours
SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Year 1 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 11 or 12 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7611	Advanced Practicum I	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Year 1 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 12 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7500	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7612	Advanced Practicum II	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

Some elective courses will be available during the summer, fall, and spring semesters.

33 Credits in 1 year

Advanced Standing – One and A Half Year Option

Year 1 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 6000	Orientation to Advanced Generalist Practice	2 hours
SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I - Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours

Year 1 SUMMER (Advanced Generalist – 5 or 6 hours)

SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Abuse	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

Year 1 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 9 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7611	Advanced Practicum I	3 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 8 or 9 hours)

SOWK 7500	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours
SOWK 7612	Advanced Practicum II	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

**Some elective courses are available during the spring and summer semesters*

33 Credits in 1.5 years

Advanced Standing – Two Year Option

Year 1 SUMMER (Advanced Generalist – 6 hours)

SOWK 6000	Orientation to Advanced Generalist Practice	2 hours
SOWK 6100	Introduction to Professional SW Education	1 hour
SOWK 7400	Advanced Social Welfare Policy and Practice	3 hours
ELECTIVE	2 or 3 hours	

Year 1 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 6 hours)

SOWK 7310	Advanced Practice II: Families	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 6 hours)

SOWK 7300	Advanced Practice I: Individuals	3 hours
SOWK 7810	Psychopathology	3 hours

Year 2 SUMMER (Advanced Generalist – 2-3 hours)

Select a minimum of five hours of General Practice Electives:

SOWK 7000	Independent Study in Social Work	3 hours
SOWK 7700	Social Work with Older Adults	3 hours
SOWK 7750	Social Work in Child & Family Settings	3 hours
SOWK 7770	Trauma Informed Child Welfare	2 hours
SOWK 7800	Social Work Practice in Health Settings	2 hours
SOWK 7820	Issues in Substance Use	3 hours
SOWK 7840	Seminar on Loss and Bereavement	3 hours
SOWK 7850	Social Work Practice in Schools	2 hours
SOWK 7860	Grant Writing in Human Services	3 hours
SOWK 7870	Social Work Practice with Neglecting & Abusing Families	3 hours
SOWK 7890	Spirituality and Social Work	3 hours

Some elective courses will be available during the summer, fall and spring semesters.

Year 2 FALL (Advanced Generalist – 5-6 hours)

ELECTIVE	2 to 3 hours	
SOWK 7611	Advanced Practicum I	3 hours

Year 2 SPRING (Advanced Generalist – 6 hours)

SOWK 7612	Advanced Practicum II	3 hours
SOWK 7320	Advanced Practice in Org. & Comm	3 hours

33 Credits in 2 years

SECTION 3: ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

MSW Program Policy and Procedure

Requirements for Good Standing in the MSW

Valdosta State University seeks to provide an environment suitable for promoting the systematic pursuit of learning. To ensure this primary goal, the university requires that students demonstrate reasonable academic progress. The retention of students who repeatedly demonstrate a lack of ability, industry, maturity, and preparation is inconsistent with this requirement. In order to continue in the Master of Social Work program, students must:

- Maintain a GPA of 2.5 or higher.
- May not get below a grade of “C” in a course. This is the lowest acceptable grade. Students may not enter the Advanced Generalist Year until they pass all required Generalist courses. Student who receive a failing grade in a practicum course (Generalist or Advanced Generalist) will be dismissed from the program.
- Achieve a GPA of 3.0 or better in order to graduate.

Courses Required at the Time of Enrollment in the MSW Program

Students entering the MSW Program who have not completed all prerequisite coursework **must complete all required coursework with the grade of C or better**, by the end of the Generalist year. Full-time on-campus students will have one year to complete all coursework. Part-time (3 or 4-year students) and web students will have two years to complete all coursework.

Special Retention and Graduation Requirements

In order to graduate Advanced Standing students (those with a B.S.W degree from an accredited institution) must complete 33 hours, which include SOWK 6000 (2 hours) and SOWK 6100 (1 hour), for a total of 26 classroom hours and 7 credit hours of practicum with a “B” average or 3.00 or higher. All other students must complete 60 semester hours including 46 credit hours of required classroom instruction and 14 credit hours of field practicum with a “B” average or a cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher. Students must maintain a grade point average of *not less* than 2.5 at all times.

The full-time face-to-face program is typically 2 years in length, but 3 and 4 year part-time plans are offered. The Web-Based program is typically 3 years in length but may be extended if necessary.

Academic Deficiency Point System

Students will be dismissed from the program if they accumulate **4 or more academic deficiency points**. A grade of “C” equals one deficiency point (and will be credited toward the M.S.W. degree). A grade of “D” equals 2 deficiency points (and will *not* be credited toward the M.S.W. degree). A grade of “F” or “WF” equals 3 deficiency points (neither of these will be credited toward the M.S.W. degree). **Because of the emphasis on practicum performance in the social work program, a grade of “F” in practicum courses equals 4 deficiency points and will result in**

dismissal from the MSW program. Students who are admitted with Advanced Standing Status will be dismissed from the program if they accumulate 2 academic deficiency points or a grade of "F" in practicum.

Academic Warning

Academic Warning serves as the initial notice that the student's performance is not adequate. A student will be placed on academic warning if at the end of the semester while on good standing, the cumulative GPA falls below 3.00. Even though a student on warning is making progress toward graduation, it should be clearly understood that without immediate academic improvement, probation may result.

Academic Probation and Suspension

A student will be placed on academic probation if at the end of the semester in which the student is on academic warning the cumulative GPA falls below the minimum specified above or the semester GPA falls below 2.50. Even though a student on probation is making progress toward graduation, it should be clearly understood that without immediate academic improvement, suspension might result.

Readmission after Dismissal for Academic Deficiencies

Readmission is not guaranteed. A student must wait a full academic year before reapplying for readmission. If readmitted, the student must retake only courses with deficiencies until the number of deficiency points is fewer than or equal to 2. If an Advanced Standing student is readmitted, the student must retake only courses with deficiencies until the number of deficiency points is fewer than or equal to 1. A student may not take a class more than twice or apply for readmission more than once. Readmission to the Social Work program is left to the discretion of the faculty and is not automatic. Upon readmission, no further accumulation of deficiency points is permitted

Advanced Standing Policy

Students with an undergraduate degree in social work from a program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Services, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors may apply for Advanced Standing (AS) status, either as a full time or part-time student. The faculty will examine the student's BSW transcript, the accreditation status of the undergraduate institution, and if necessary, BSW course syllabi, in order to determine whether the generalist content is transferable to the VSU MSW Program. Likewise, undergraduate faculty recommendations are necessary. It is the Department's intent to accept only students who have graduated in the top 20% of their undergraduate class. Three letters of reference for admission are required for AS students. Of the three required reference letters, one must be completed by an undergraduate BSW faculty member, and a second must be completed by either the Director of Field Instruction OR the student's Faculty Field Liaison. The VSU Social Work faculty will determine the portion of the generalist year that may be waived, whether additional generalist courses are required, and whether the student may be admitted to AS status.

In order to be admitted with advanced standing status, the undergraduate work program must have been completed within the last 5 years in order to meet the requirements of the generalist year in this program. The student must meet all requirements for admission. When admitted to the program, AS students must attend a mandatory orientation before beginning the program, and they must enroll in the following summer session courses: SOWK 6000, SOWK 6100, SOWK 7400. All AS students will be assigned to the Department Head or to a faculty member who is on campus during the summer for academic advising. In addition, students must complete their practicum application and meet with the Director of Field Instruction during the summer. Advanced standing students have the option of taking other courses in the summer, but they are not required to do so.

The MSW Curriculum for full, part-time, and web-based programs and advanced standing programs of study is shown in the Program of Study section of this handbook.

Deficiency Points for Advanced Standing Students (*Policy approved in November, 2010*)

Students who are admitted with Advanced Standing Status will be dismissed from the MSW Program if they accumulate 2 academic deficiency points or a grade of “F” in practicum.

Registration

Students must be advised by their assigned Academic Advisor before registering for classes. The Academic advisor is responsible for lifting the student’s registration flag. In special cases the administrative specialist/coordinator may lift student flags per written request of the Department Head or advisor.

Registration dates are posted on the Office of the Registrar’s website and on the online academic calendar. Students must register online. If the class schedule from the Registrar’s office contains an error or is unclear, call the MSW office (229-249-4864) for clarification. Please follow all directions for registration carefully and pay fees on time so that registration can be completed. Students may not attend class if they are not registered for the class!

Requesting Changes to Student’s Program Cohort

All students should be aware that all courses may have an online component, and most of the electives will be offered in a hybrid format to enable both web and face-to-face students to take these courses. ALL students must become familiar with virtual technology.

Students are admitted into a specific MSW Program Cohort - Full/Part Time On-campus Cohort (Evening Classes) and the Web Based Cohort. Students will not be allowed to change cohorts unless there are compelling reasons for doing so, such as life emergencies, excessive travel distances, etc. Students wishing to make a change must contact their academic advisor and communicate the reasons in writing. The request form can be found on the social work website at the following url:

<https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/social-work/forms/program-change.php>

The student's advisor will present this request for approval by the Program Director.

Note: Approval is not guaranteed.

Changes in the MSW Program

The Social Work Program seeks to maintain an up-to-date curriculum that is based on current knowledge and practice within the field of social work. Thus, the MSW Curriculum Committee monitors and approves changes in courses in order to maintain a quality curriculum. Similarly, the Department of Social Work makes periodic program changes as well as policy changes. Students will be advised verbally and in writing of all changes. Likewise, all changes will be updated in the *MSW Student Handbook*, the *VSU Graduate Catalog*, and the Social Work Program materials and website.

Leaves of Absence and Returns from Withdrawal Policy

On occasions when a student voluntarily leaves the program for a period of time, at the end of a semester or through withdrawal, they are still eligible to register for social work classes for three semesters, if they were a student in good standing at the time of the leave or withdrawal. Before a student can return to classes, they must speak with their advisor and complete all VSU and MSW program procedures for returning to class.

Attendance Policy

In-class attendance is a crucial part of a student's exposure to social work knowledge, skills and practice as well as professional reflection, socialization and networking. Students may have an absence noted as "excused" in the case of serious medical illness, serious family emergencies or an absence may be approved as excused by the Instructor. Students are responsible for providing documentation to the instructor for excused absences due to serious medical illness or serious family emergencies. An excused absence allows the student to avoid grade penalties outlined below ONLY IF they adequately complete all catch-up work as assigned by the course instructor. It is always the responsibility of the student to communicate with the instructor about the specific catch-up work that is necessary to adequately prepare for future classes and course assignments, and to avoid grade penalties.

Due to the nature of social work education, face to face meetings are more important in some courses than in other course. Thus, instructors may modify the impact of absences based on the needs of any particular course. These modifications must be clearly detailed in each course syllabus.

Attendance Policy: Web-Hybrid Program

One (1) unexcused weekend absence will result in the drop of one half a letter grade in the student's final course grade. Two (2) weekend absences, either excused or unexcused, will result in a student's being unable to complete the course because too much content has been missed. The course must be re-taken in order for the student to receive academic credit.

Attendance Policy: Face-to-Face Program

Because of the large number of classes per course per semester, (1) Students may miss one class per course for the semester. However, students may be required to do catch-up work for

this class to avoid a loss of points. **Being able to miss one class per course does not apply to practicum courses as indicated in the attendance policy on the course syllabus.** (2) Each **subsequent** unexcused absence (after the first absence) will result in a drop of one-half of a letter grade in the student's final grade. **Three total (3) class absences, either excused or unexcused, will result in a student's being unable to complete the course because too much content has been missed. Three missed classes missed represent 20% of a course. The course must be re-taken in order for the student to receive academic credit.**

If a student exceeds the allowed absences before midterm, she or he may withdraw from the class electronically with no penalty. If absences are exceeded after midterm or the student fails to withdraw in a timely manner, the student will receive a grade of "F" (failing) or "WF" (withdraw failing). A grade of "I" (incomplete) can be given only at the instructor's discretion when the student is 1) passing the course and 2) when ALL absences are excused and verifiable. Students can remove the "I" by repeating the class the following school year.

Inclement Weather Policy

The administration of Valdosta State University diligently monitors the weather in Valdosta, South Georgia and the region. Notices of cancellations, closures and delays in opening will be sent to the VSU communities through VSU email, posts on the VSU website, press releases to news outlets and social media. In case of severe or inclement weather please monitor the VSU website and news sources for information regarding schedule changes.

In cases of emergency or serious storms, the Department of Social Work office will provide regular updates to students and students who have difficulty driving to class must communicate directly with their instructors and make decisions which ensure their personal safety.

Cancellation of Social Work Web Weekend Classes – Relevant Only to Web Students

Because the nature of web weekend classes is different from the nature of classes in the on campus or face-to-face program, the Social Work Program is establishing a policy regarding cancellation of web weekend classes in case of inclement weather or weather emergencies. In creating the hybrid program for social work professionals, faculty members have differentiated instructional content that must be presented face-to-face from content that can be presented and mastered online. Content that is presented to students during weekend web classes is deemed to be essential content requiring class time. Therefore, because of the critical nature of web weekend classes, when weekend classes are cancelled by the university, these classes must be made up. If an entire web weekend (12 hours) is cancelled or some portion of the weekend classes are cancelled due to the closure of Valdosta State University (e.g., Friday night classes), The decision to reschedule will be made on the Monday morning or the first morning after the university is open following the closure, and all web students will be informed immediately by e-mail.

In cases of emergency or serious storms, the Department of Human Services office will provide regular updates to students, but students who have difficulty driving to class must

communicate directly with their instructors and make decisions which ensure their personal safety. The President's Office will monitor emergency preparedness and issue weather and other bulletins regarding the current situation. These bulletins will be posted on the VSU Home Page and in case of emergency, students will be notified electronically. There will also be releases made to local radio and television stations.

Examinations

Students who miss major exams or final exams without a valid medical excuse or documentation of an emergency **will receive a zero on the examination**. Make-up exams will not be administered without a valid excuse.

Rewrites

No rewrites of papers or assignments will be allowed to improve a course grade, unless specified in the course syllabus or through specific instructions of the professor. Individual instructors may allow exceptions to this policy.

Timeliness on Assignments in Class and Practicum

All assignments in the Department of Social Work and in all practicum *courses are due on the day/time assigned*. Late assignments will be penalized according to each instructor's grading policies that can be found in each course syllabus. Students are encouraged to examine these policies at the beginning of the semester.

VSU Graduate School Academic Standards and Regulations

Policies and procedures from the VSU Graduate School that apply to MSW students are available through the provided link: <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/academic-standards-regulations/>. The following links are especially relevant for MSW students:

[Grading System](#)

[Appeal of Dismissal from Graduate School](#)

[Grade Appeals](#)

[Withdrawal from Courses Policies](#)

[General Requirements for Graduate Degrees](#)

[Transfer Credit](#)

[Application for Graduation](#)

[Graduate Assistantships](#)

[Academic Dishonesty](#)

[Plagiarism](#)

[Student E-mail Responsibilities](#)

In the following sections of this *MSW Student handbook* some of the preceding VSU policies and procedures will be elaborated on for the professional and academic practices and procedures of the MSW program.

Grade Reports and Student Records

MSW students receive grade reports at the end of each semester. MSW students are expected to contact their advisors whenever their work is unsatisfactory. The Department of Social Work adheres to the standards of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). FERPA protects the privacy of personally identifiable information contained in students' school records. Generally, disclosure requires written consent from a student. For more information on FERPA,

<https://valdosta.policytech.com/dotNet/documents/?docid=55&public=true>

The Office of the Registrar maintains information concerning the academic records of students. The Registrar's Office issues transcripts of records and certificates for various governmental agencies. Students are encouraged to check with their Academic Advisor when questions arise concerning their academic status. Each student has a permanent record to which only he or she and authorized personnel have access, and it is to the student's advantage to check this record periodically. Transcripts from the Registrar's office are provided at a small cost upon the written request of the student. Two weeks' processing time should be allowed. Transcripts of academic records from other colleges are not provided. The student must contact previous institutions attended for those transcripts. It is also the student's responsibility to contact testing agencies for test score reports.

Incomplete "I" Grades

Incomplete grades are only given in verifiable, exceptional circumstances. Students requesting an incomplete must have a passing grade in the course at the time of request. A report of "I" requires subsequent completion of all requirements in the course involved within one calendar year regardless of the enrollment status of the student.

It is the student's responsibility to arrange with his/her course instructor for course completion. Students will not be allowed to carry a grade of Incomplete or "I" for Social Work Courses into their Practicum. Thus, any "I" must be completed by the beginning of the semester in which the student is scheduled to enter practicum. This policy applies to Generalist students only. Failure to complete full responsibilities for coursework will delay a student's entry into Practicum. Additionally, students may not enter practicum when they are on Academic Probation (an overall GPA of less than 3.00).

VSU's Incomplete policies and procedures may be found at this link in the "Grading system" section of this link. <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/academic-standards-regulations/>

Computing Grade Point Average (GPA)

Each semester, a student's grade point average (GPA) is computed by dividing the number of hours for which he or she is enrolled (attempted hours into the total quality points received). (A cumulative average is calculated by dividing total quality points earned by total hours attempted, excluding transfer hours). Grades from all graduate coursework are included in calculation of the GPA by the Registrar's Office.

Procedure to Appeal Grades

Students who have just cause to appeal the assignment of a course grade **must first discuss this with their course instructor**. Students wishing to appeal a grade must follow the process described on the [Academic Affairs Grade Appeal Form](#). General information about grade appeals at VSU is found on <http://catalog.valdosta.edu/graduate/academic-standards-regulations/>

Application for Graduation

For MSW students the Application for degree must be made the semester before the student's graduation semester. In the MSW program students first meet with their Academic advisor to begin this process. Information about Application for Graduation is found at: <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/advising/application-for-graduation.php>

Student Opinion of Instruction (SOI) Procedures and Timelines

VSU provides specific information about the Student Opinion of Instruction (SOIs) at <https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/sois/>

In the MSW program students are strongly encouraged to provide feedback to their instructors at the end of each semester through the SOIs. It is our expectation that all students will complete SOI evaluations on each course for which they are registered. The Department believes that the SOI provides students with a voice in their assessment of their courses, and they are to take this responsibility seriously in both course evaluations and in professional practice.

After the semester is over the instructors for each course can view their SOI frequency and descriptive statistics as well as all qualitative comments. SOI quantitative and qualitative data cannot be linked to the students who gave what feedback. The only exception would be if a student threatened death or harm in their SOI comments.

Student Information Update Policy

It is the responsibility students to notify the Social Work Program of any change in name, address, email address, or telephone numbers. Students should complete the online contact information update form which can be found at the following url: <https://www.valdosta.edu/colleges/education/social-work/forms/contact-update.php>

- 1) All students will receive electronic and regular mail from the MSW Program that will be sent to their VSU e-mail address. The Social Work Program is NOT responsible for information that students fail to receive as a result of changes of address that have NOT been reported to the Department of Human Services or the MSW Program or the use of non-VSU internet addresses. Students will receive a VSU email address when they enroll in the university, and Department/university communication only will be sent to that e-mail address.

Transfer of Credit

In general, Valdosta State allows the substitution of no more than two three-hour courses into a program of study for a student in the Graduate School. See

<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/graduate-school/faqs.php> for further information.

The current policy concerning the transfer of courses is explained when a prospective student inquires about it, and at the student orientation session in the summer of each academic year.

To transfer courses, students must present the syllabus of the course they wish to substitute along with the course description from the relevant university catalog. Both the Department Head and an instructor who teaches the course(s) must review the course syllabus to determine if:

1. the course is recent enough (within five years) to ensure that the student has a current knowledge base
2. the course is comparable to our own or can serve as an elective
3. the student earned a B or better
4. the course was offered by an accredited institution
5. be earned at an institution that is regionally accredited
6. be graduate-level courses
7. not exceed specific program limitations on total number of hours.

If the course is acceptable to the department, a course substitution form or a transfer credit memo to the Graduate School for approval. The course substitution form or memo specifies the course, hours, institution of origin, and how the course should be applied (e.g., general elective or a course substitution for an existing course in the curriculum). All transfer requests are subject to approval by the Dean of the Graduate School, and grades transferred fall under the current deficiency point system. No proficiency exams are used. No transfer courses allow for a reduction in required credit hours.

Most requests for transfer of courses come from students who began or earned another master's degree and completed courses that are similar to those offered in the social work curriculum. For students who have completed courses in other accredited social work programs, the Council on Social Work Education provides specific requirements regarding course substitutions, and these policies are followed by the Department of Social Work. Students not enrolled in the MSW program may take elective courses with the permission of the Department Head, but required courses are restricted to MSW students.

No academic credit is given for life experience or previous work experience.

SECTION 4: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR and CONDUCT

Professional Behavior and Conduct for MSW Students

The Social Work Program is charged with the preparation of students for entry into the social work profession, thereby ensuring graduates' ability to practice competently and to become eligible for professional licensure. The Social Work Program, therefore, has an obligation to the

social work profession, the State of Georgia Licensing Board, students enrolled in the program, and current and future clients of these students to ensure that graduates are competent practitioners who have demonstrated mastery of professional education in three primary areas:

1. Academic performance that provides a foundation for the practice of social work;
2. Adherence to the values and ethics of the social work profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics;
3. Professional standards of conduct that apply to student and professional behavior.

Academic requirements as well as standards of professional practice and codes of conduct have been drawn from a number of sources. First, the *Student Handbook* and *Field Handbook* include policies that govern the Social Work Program at Valdosta State University (VSU). Enrollment in the program means that students must meet academic standards and regulations set by the Graduate School (VSU) as well as policies of VSU (Student Code of Conduct).

Students may obtain the [VSU Graduate Catalog from the Graduate School website](#) and the VSU Student Code of Conduct can be found on the [VSU Division of Student Affairs website](#).

All accredited social work programs in the United States must meet educational standards and policies of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (<http://www.cswe.org/CSWE/>) which ensures a consistent level of quality in professional education. Professional behavior and expectations for professional social workers can be found in the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics (2017) <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics>

Finally, social work practice in the State of Georgia is regulated through the Office of the Secretary of State by the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers & Marriage & Family Therapists which regulates the practice of clinical social work in the state. <http://sos.ga.gov/index.php/licensing/plb/43/policies4>

When a student chooses to enter the social work program, the student agrees to adhere to specific standards of behavior, codes of conduct, as well as the Laws of the State of Georgia that regulate social work practice. The purpose of this Statement of Understanding is to clarify that entry into a professional program is quite different from entry into a non-professional academic program.

Academic Performance in the MSW Program

Students are required to demonstrate mastery of academic coursework in order to practice social work in the State of Georgia or other states in which licensure is granted. Student academic policies are provided in the Student Handbook, Field Handbook, and the VSU Student Code of Conduct, Sect. 1, Academic and Student Conduct Code. Students must maintain a B average (a 3.00 grade point average) in order to graduate from the MSW Program. Academic dishonesty is not acceptable, as these behaviors go against policies of the MSW Program, VSU as well as the NASW Code of Ethics. Because students are enrolled in a professional program, classroom and practicum attendance is assumed to be an extension of professional practice, and attendance is mandatory unless students have a medical excuse or family emergency (e.g., Student Handbook and Field Handbook, MSW Attendance Policy and Policy on Academic Misconduct).

Adherence to Values and Ethics of the Profession

In both the classroom and field agencies, MSW students are required to behave in a manner that matches the values and ethics of the profession. This requirement includes interactions with faculty members and staff, peers, agency professional and non-professional staff, field instructors, and current and future clients.

Adherence to Professional Codes of Behavior and Standards of Conduct

Students also agree to adhere to all codes and standards of professional social work practice. Expected student behavior is explained in the Student Handbook, Field Handbook, and also in the VSU Student Code of Conduct that is found on the VSU Student Affairs website. Therefore, incoming students must become familiar with professional and academic expectations.

Expected standards of behavior are outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics (August 2017) <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English> and this information is infused into all graduate classes. The demands of professional practice require that social workers treat others respectfully, and social workers must monitor their own behavior so they can use their knowledge, psychological, and emotional resources to help others in distress. Some students are drawn to social work because of previous personal crises and substantive problems. In most cases, students have successfully addressed and resolved these difficulties and have learned to manage their prior problems effectively. In a few situations, students exhibit a pattern of behaviors that suggests that they have not yet resolved their own problems and difficulties, and are not yet ready to engage in the demands of social work practice in which the focus of professional attention and intervention is clearly on the provision of support and assistance to others, and not themselves.

Summary of Professional Behavior/Conduct

The goal of the MSW Program is to prepare students for generalist and advanced generalist practice. Students in the program are expected to meet the academic and professional behavior and conduct expectations. If a classroom or field instructor develops concerns about a student's academic or professional conduct or identifies a pattern of student behaviors that is concerning,

- this individual first will discuss the concern with the student and will develop specific recommendations or problem-solving strategies.
- If the concerns continue or the strategies do not decrease the behaviors, the individual then will contact the student's Academic Advisor.
- If the Academic Advisor or other faculty believes that the student has not shown sufficient progress in addressing the problems/concerns, the individual may request a more formal meeting in which with the student and additional faculty members participate.

Possible types of meetings include a Student Staffing, Field Practicum Termination Meeting, or Academic Review/Special Advising Meeting. These are formal problem-solving meetings in which the Academic Advisor or other faculty member believes that the involvement of the additional faculty members would be helpful in problem-resolution. These meetings and possible student outcomes are described in the *Student Handbook* and *Field Handbook*.

In addition, the following student expectations are addressed explicitly by the *NASW Code of Ethics* as well as other referenced standards.

1. Social work students are expected to uphold and advance the values, ethics, and mission of the profession of Social Work (Sect. 5.01B, *NASW Code of Ethics*, *Student Handbook*, *Field Handbook*, *EPAS*).
2. Social work students are expected to treat fellow students, faculty and staff with respect, honesty, courtesy, and fairness (2.01A, *NASW Code of Ethics*) and avoid unwarranted criticism (2.01B).
3. Social work students should not practice, conduct, facilitate or collaborate with any form of discrimination (4.02, *NASW Code of Ethics*) and respect and honor human similarities and differences (VSU Non-Discrimination Policy
<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/non-discrimination.pdf>
<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/social-equity/documents/vsu-diversity-plan-.pdf#VSU>
4. Social work students should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, deception or plagiarism (Section 4.04, *NASW Code of Ethics*, *Student Handbook*, Policy on Academic Misconduct, *Field Handbook*, VSU Code of Student Conduct).
5. Social work students whose personal problems, psychosocial stress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental disorders interfere with their ability to meet the program's expectations and standards are expected to take immediate corrective action to insure that these problems are managed. The issue that is labeled as "fitness to practice" is a key part of professional conduct and behavior that specifically is addressed in Section 4.05 of the *NASW Code of Ethics* (also, *Student Handbook* and *Field Handbook*, MSW Criteria for Non-Academic Termination).
6. Social work students should not allow their private conduct to interfere with their ability to meet the program's expectations (Section 4.03, *NASW Code of Ethics*).
7. Social work students engaged in research are expected to abide by all guidelines developed for the protection of subjects (Section 5.02; Policies of the VSU Institutional Review Board

for Research on Human Subjects (<http://www.valdosta.edu/grants>), including completion of the free “Students in Research” CITI training module available at <http://citiprogram.org>. Students must earn a score of 80% or higher on the module assessment. You may retake the assessment as needed to meet the passing score requirement. Your CITI completion report is valid for 3 years.

8. Social work students are expected to continue to work on areas of professional growth that are identified in a Student Development Plan. The student is obligated to follow through on all recommendations for corrective action specified by a faculty member, advisor or the faculty as a whole (*Student Handbook and Field Handbook*).
9. Reasonable accommodation Requests: Students in need of reasonable modification of the instructional context for all classes in the MSW Program must register with the Access Center on the VSU Campus. If modifications are needed in a particular class, students are expected to communicate directly with the classroom instructor. This communication should occur at the beginning of the academic semester. If the modifications require the assistance of personnel, equipment, or materials beyond those normally provided by instructor(s) or academic unit, the student must contact the Access Office (<http://www.valdosta.edu/access>) in regard to this request or call the office at (229)245-2498.

List of Expected Conduct and Behavior for MSW Students

The Council on Social Work Education requires that all accredited MSW Programs set forth clearly stated policies and standards that ensure that graduating students are competent professionally and are able to work in the field of social work. The following is a list of professional standards with identified areas of concern that may indicate that students are unwilling or unable to follow standards set forth in the *Student Handbook, Field Handbook*, and the *NASW Code of Ethics* (2017). The list is not inclusive and may be amended by faculty.

The following represents expected conduct and behavior of all MSW Students:

(Developed at the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater, by Dr. Michael Wallace, 1992; Revised by Dr. Martha Giddings in 2007; Approved by the Faculty of the Department of Social Work in June, 2007).

1. Student Performance

Expected Student Standard of Performance:

- Plans and organizes work effectively
- Turns in assignments that are complete and on-time
- Makes arrangements for his/her special needs
- Abides by attendance requirements (as outlined in Attendance Policy)
- Engages in academic honesty

Indicators of Concern Regarding Student Performance:

- *Appears to exhibit a pattern of:*
- Poor organizational skills
- Request extensions on assignments and exams

- Turns in assignments late and incomplete
- Multiple absences per class or field placement per semester
- Engages in academic dishonesty (See Academic Dishonesty Policy) *

2. Student Conduct and Professional Behavior

Expected Student Standard of Conduct and Behavior:

- Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others
- Actively participates in class discussions/activities
- Shows respect for others' opinions
- Understands and respects personal boundaries of others
- Listens to feedback from peers/faculty/field instructors
- Demonstrates a willingness to understand diversity and human similarities/differences
- Conducts self in accord with the NASW Code of Ethics
- Uses feedback to correct professional performance errors
- Willing to learn new knowledge and skills
- Abides by classroom policies on appropriate use of technology

Indicators of Concern regarding Student Conduct and Behavior:

- Appears to create conflict in class/practicum which impedes learning or relationship-building
- Uncooperative/unwilling to participate in class/practicum discussions, activities
- Consistently late to class/practicum, leaves early, or changes schedules
- Sleeps during class/practicum
- Engages in inappropriate class/practicum activities
- Disrupts class/practicum in such a way as to interfere with self-learning and peer learning (e.g., during class, talking to friends, using cell phone for non-emergencies, text-messaging, "surfing the net", talking to friends on Facebook or other social networks, using laptop for reasons not related to class)
- Uses derogatory language or demeaning remarks
- Appears unwilling or unable to accept feedback
- Monopolizes class/practicum discussions
- Consistently complains about class/practicum workload to the point of impeding activities
- Unwilling/unable to develop an understanding of people different from self
- Discriminatory behavior or harassment toward others*
- Physical action directed at clients, faculty, staff or peers*
 - Unethical professional behavior (e.g., sexual contact with client, dating a client)*
 - Unable to assume the role of learner

3. Student Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)

Expected Student Standard of Emotional Self-Control:

- Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., student appears to understand the issue and has resolved the topic that is being shared)
- Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics
- Appears to be able to separate personal issues from others' problems or issues
- Deals appropriately in class/practicum with issues that arouse emotions
- Demonstrates awareness of personal limits
- Understands and is able to discuss the effect of her/his personal behavior on others or situations that arise
- Deals appropriately with conflicts between personal and professional values

Indicators of Concern of Student Emotional Self-Control

- When engaged in self-disclosure, student appears to be working through unresolved personal issues
- Overreacts to feedback (e.g., becomes extremely negative or hostile)*
- Appears unable/unwilling to control personal emotional responses (e.g., yells, walks out of class, physically aggressive or threatening, inappropriate touching)*
- Faculty concern regarding possible substance abuse or mental health issues*
- Directs verbal threats to clients, faculty, staff or peers*
- Demonstrates impaired judgment, poor decision-making, or poor problem-solving*
- Consistent failure to engage in effective working relationships with clients*
- Consistent failure to engage in effective supervisory relationships with supervisor, field instructors, etc. (e.g., won't follow directions, unreasonably angry at supervisor, dishonest with supervisor, etc.)*
- Unwillingness to assist a peer, colleague, or client in distress (e.g., refusing to help someone in distress)*

4. Student Communication Skills

Expected Student Standard of Student Communication:

- Shows consistency in written communication (e.g. good spelling, punctuation, clear sentence structure and paragraphing, organization, logical thinking)
- Demonstrates ability to write effectively in client records
- Shows command of English language
- Abides by Department/VSU standards for written work
- Demonstrates critical thinking skills
- Is able to articulate ideas, thoughts, concepts, etc., clearly
- Is able to communicate clearly

Indicators of Concern regarding Student Communication:

- Written work is often vague, shows difficulty in expressing clear and concise ideas
- Written work contains many errors in spelling, punctuation, structure, and student makes no effort to improve
- Appears to have plagiarized the work of others*
- Appears to have difficulty in expressing self when speaking

- Appears to have difficulty communicating so that others can hear or understand
- Presents inappropriate non-verbal communication with clients.

Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics

Students are responsible for comporting themselves in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics (NASW, 2017), just as all social work professionals are held to the standards of the Code of Ethics. Likewise, students are responsible for becoming familiar with the content of the Code of Ethics that can be accessed through this link

<https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics>

Ignorance of the Code does not excuse unethical behavior, especially egregious, major violations of the Code. Students are advised to be aware of actions and comments that may be perceived as code violations. Students also must be aware that they must exhibit comportment that is consistent with the guidelines of the Georgia Professional Licensing Boards, all policies of Valdosta State University, and existing laws.

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I have attended the Student Orientation and I have read and listened to a discussion of expected student conduct and behavior for graduate students in the MSW Program. I have also read the Professional Standards of Conduct expected of MSW Students. I am indicating my agreement with the following expectations:

(Please initial each statement)

_____ I understand that by enrolling in the Valdosta State University Master of Social Work Program, I agree to abide by all academic policies of the Social Work Program and Valdosta State University in order to graduate in good academic standing.

_____ I understand that as an MSW graduate student I agree to abide by the standards, conduct, values, and ethics of the social work profession.

_____ I understand that although I have been admitted to the Master of Social Work Program, if my professional development, personal conduct, or performance are not deemed satisfactory by my instructors who are members of the social work profession, the faculty has both the right and the responsibility to reconsider my suitability for the social work profession.

Signature of MSW Student

Date

Print Name

SECTION 5: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

Advising Policy

MSW students are expected to maintain consistent contact with their advisors throughout their time in the MSW Program. These contacts are particularly important when students wish to make a change in their educational program, when they need information about the MSW Program, advice, or when they are having difficulty with a particular aspect of the MSW Program.

All students are assigned academic advisors when they enter the MSW Program. This assignment is maintained throughout their enrollment in the MSW Program. Incoming students are advised during a mandatory Orientation Workshop that is held prior to their beginning classes or during the first week of classes or shortly thereafter. The Department Head, representative faculty members, and staff members of the Department present a formal orientation in which students are introduced to all policies and procedures reflected in the *MSW Student Handbook*, the social work curriculum, program expectations, and campus services that are available at Valdosta State University. Thereafter, advising may take place in individual meetings with the advisor, in small groups, or in classes, as needed. **Advisees must contact their Academic Advisors each semester in order to set up advising meetings to evaluate their progress in the MSW Program and to discuss their plans for subsequent semesters.** A reminder about academic advising is sent out to students and is posted on the internet approximately one-month before the official advising period begins each semester. An advising appointment or contact is necessary before a student's flag may be lifted. Relevant advising dates will be posted on the Social Work Program calendar.

Academic Advisors are expected to assist students in development of a formal Program of Study which determines how the student will progress through the MSW Program. Each semester after the initial advising meeting, both the advisor and the student must sign the Program of Study Form to indicate that advising has occurred, and that the student is making progress toward degree completion. The academic advisor has a range of other roles to play in regard to the student. In addition to educational advising, students are told to approach their advisors with other problems that they have in the MSW Program such as academic or behavioral problems or personal or family emergencies. In case of serious problems, the advisor is responsible for assisting the student in responding to these issues. If students are referred for Special Staffings or Academic Advising/Special Advising (that is addressed in a subsequent section of the *Handbook*), the student's advisor serves in the role of advocate for the student in the called meetings. A part of the advocate's role is to help to prepare the student for the specific meeting. Advisors are responsible for signing off on changes in the student's academic program such as a change of cohort or a decision to withdraw from the MSW Program for a semester or permanently. These responsibilities are outlined below.

An on-line Academic Advisor Survey is available to evaluate the academic advising process. The survey is comprised of questions about the type and frequency of contacts with their advisor, accessibility of the advisor, helpfulness of the advisor, as well as a rating of student satisfaction

with the advising process. The results of this anonymous survey will be analyzed for the Department as a whole as well as for each advisor. Students should talk with their Advisor or the Department Head regarding any questions that they have about advising.

Student Responsibilities

- Contact your advisor for an appointment each semester before deadline for registration.
- Discuss problems that arise in regard to a specific faculty member with the individual first unless there are compelling reasons not to.
- You may also communicate with your Academic Advisor about academic or program issues or problems.
- Report to your advisor any changes in your status (part-time or full-time; GPA below 3.0; U, F, in any course)
- Discuss any difficulty that may impact your success in the program (E.g. moving, a new job)
- Discuss your program of study including choices of practicum and elective courses
- Keep an up-to-date Program of Study Form
- Make sure you and your advisor sign off on the form each semester.
- Discuss your need (if it occurs) to drop out of the program
- Discuss first with the advisor any need for advocacy that you may have
- Meet with your advisor for all forms that may require a signature (call ahead for appointment unless there is an emergency. Your procrastination does not constitute an emergency for your advisor!)
- Behave in a manner consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics in regard to your advisor and in regard to interactions with instructors and peers.

Role of the Liaison

The faculty advisor and liaison have different roles and are often different faculty members. The advisor will remain the same throughout the program. The liaison is assigned for each practicum. The liaison's critical role in student practicum experiences is addressed fully in the *Field Handbook*.

Specialty Scheduled Meetings with Students

Occasionally, situations arise in which more than one faculty member may wish to meet with a student jointly with one or more other faculty member. Possible types of meetings are listed below:

Staffing/Field Staffing

A staffing is scheduled with, the consent of the Department Head when it is decided that a situation warrants a student's meeting with several faculty who are associated with and/or concerned about a particular situation. The purpose of the staffing is to address issues, while allowing the student more privacy than a Special Advising.

Field Practicum Termination Meeting

The guidelines for determining whether a practicum should be terminated are found in the *Field Handbook*. Individuals to be notified by the faculty liaison include the Department Head, Field Director, Field Instructor, Field Liaison, Academic Advisor and Student.

Academic Review/Special Advising Meeting

An Academic Review/Special Advising Meeting is held when a student is accused of academic misconduct, is terminated from practicum, or at other times when the student's status or serious conduct matters are in question.

The Department Head, the student's Classroom Instructor, Educational Advisor, Field Director or Field Liaison may request an Academic Review/Special Advising Meeting. The process is as follows: The request must be made to the Department Head of the Department of Social Work in written form or may be initiated by the Department Head who will notify all faculty members about the need for a meeting. After notification, the faculty may present their recommendations in writing to the Department Head regarding who should attend the meeting and any other concerns. The Department Head will set a time for the review and will determine who should attend. All participants will be notified of the meeting by the Department Head. The Student will be notified by the Department Head in writing and must respond within two working days. Academic Review/Special Advising meetings are mandatory, and students are required to attend at the appointed time. The role of the Educational Advisor is to guide the student through the process and serve as the student's Advocate. The presence of the entire faculty is NOT required, and the student and their advocate should be notified of all issues to be addressed in the meeting at least three days prior to the meeting.

The Advisor and student will meet prior to the advisement meeting in order to discuss the student's situation in detail. The advising meeting is then held in which all participants are able to present their views. A final decision will be made by the Department Head based on the feedback and recommendations by the participants. Prior to the Advising Meeting, the Department Head will ask a faculty member in attendance to serve as Facilitator. The Facilitator will assist the Department Head in taking notes during the meeting, and the Department Head will write up a summary of the meeting and recommendation decided on by the faculty members.

Student Development Plan

When students are identified as having problems that lead to convening either a Staffing or an Academic Advising/Special Advising Meeting, the Student Development Plan will be used as a template for specifying concerns that are articulated in the meeting as well as recommendations made by the faculty in order to address the concerns. The Plan will be completed within seven days of the meeting and will contain behaviorally-specific problem behaviors of the student, either in regard to class or field. The Student Development Plan will be used as a way of monitoring problem-solving efforts on the part of the student, and will enable both the student and faculty to be apprised of these efforts. A time line for problem-remediation will be specified on the Student Development Plan.

The Student Development plan will identify areas of deficiency (including objectives that are not being met by the student), behaviorally-specific actions that must be taken by the student to remediate the situation, target dates for completion of each action, specific actions to be taken by the supervisor or class instructor in order to assist the student, and the expected completion date of the overall Plan and/or specific parts of the Plan. After discussing the plan with the student and possibly modifying it based on that discussion, the Plan will be signed by the student, and one faculty member will be appointed as Student Advocate (this should happen before the meeting) to monitor implementation of the Student Development Plan and to ensure ensuring that all student requirements are completed in a Satisfactory manner. If actions on the Plan are not completed in a satisfactory manner by the student or if egregious incidents occur while a Student Development Plan is in place, a follow-up Special Advisory Meeting will be convened by the Department Head. A student's failure to complete all requirements of the Student Development Plan within the required time frame may result in the student's termination from the MSW Program. The Department Head will take minutes of the formal meetings and will maintain a record of these meetings for the student's file. Because of the seriousness of implementation of a Student Development Plan for a student, the student's failure to complete all requirements of the Student Development Plan, additional incidents of egregious behavior, or a pattern of egregious student behavior are as one of the possible reasons for Criteria for Non-Academic for Termination of MSW Students.

Student Development Plan

Student:

Meeting Date:

I. <u>Areas in Need of Improvement</u>	<u>Actions to be Taken by Student</u>	<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Action to be Taken by Supervisor/Faculty</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>

The student's failure to correct areas in need of improvement within the specified time frame may result in termination from the MSW Program.

Student

Department Head

Advisor

Date

Criteria for Non-Academic Termination of MSW Students

An Explanation of Fitness to Practice and Professional Comportment within Social Work

Most helping professions have a regulatory group which maintains the name of individuals who have been endorsed as qualified to practice within the profession. Fitness to practice in social work refers to the idea that professionals will comport themselves in such a way that supports and enhances the purpose, goals, values, standards and ethics of the profession.

As a student, you are expected to develop into practitioners who are fit to practice. Three areas fitness to practice are mirrored in the three areas delineated above: 1) academic performance in classroom and field (competence); 2) adherence to the values and ethics of the profession (ethical conduct); and 3) adherence to professional codes of behavior and standards of conduct (impairment due to personal problems and dysfunction). However, fitness to practice for students who are petitioning for entry into the social work profession, extends beyond these areas. It requires that you learn to wear this mantle of professionalism beyond the confines of the classroom and the field, even when doing so causes discomfort. As future social work professionals, you will be held accountable to standards of behavior by your clients, colleagues, supervisors, and others within the community by whom you might not choose to be evaluated. You will be required to take some responsibility for the effect of your behavior on others, even when you would rather not do so. Continual professional comportment is the price of professional credibility. As students your professional comportment and credibility will be assessed by your instructors in areas and ways that might not be directly related to academic performance or your direct work with clients in practicum. For some students, this type of evaluation is uncomfortable and seems unrelated to “making the grade.” Some students who undergo this evaluation process believe that we are trying to change who they are. This is not the case. We are evaluating your personal ability to bear the burden of accountability that is associated with being a social work professional.

Students in the Department of Social Work are bound by the rules of the larger University as stated in the University Student Handbook. In addition, a student’s enrollment in the MSW Program may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Violation of the NASW Code of Ethics (2017) or the Code of Ethics of the State of Georgia Composite Board. Students are responsible for being familiar with the NASW Code of Ethics. Content from the Code is infused throughout the curriculum. The Code of Ethics can be found on the Department of Social Work Website. Links to the Code are found in the *Field Handbook* and in this handbook. Any questions or concerns about the Code should be discussed with advisors or classroom instructors.
2. Presenting oneself in such a way as to be rejected by *two* different agencies per practicum application.
3. A pattern of complaints indicating that the student is unable to engage faculty members, student peers, field instructors, or clients in such a way as to form a professional, helpful, and/or collegial relationships (e.g., being unable or unwilling to demonstrate nonjudgmental attitudes; unable or unwilling to allow for client self-

determination; unable to follow faculty, field instructor, or agency directives; unable to work collegially with peers).

4. A pattern of complaints that indicates the student is unable to work within Department of Social Work, Valdosta State University, or field agency policies and procedures when such policies and procedures are not in violation of professional social work values and/or codes of ethics (e.g., failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct; personal integrity or emotional stability in the classroom or practicum; inability to engage in a supervisory relationship with assigned field instructor; inability to follow supervisory guidance, directives, or instructions; inability to follow faculty directives or instructions; inappropriate, disrespectful or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff either at the university or in practicum; inability to communicate effectively with faculty, staff, field instructors, or peers).
5. A pattern of complaints that indicates the student's behavior does not reflect a standard of objectivity suitable to the profession. (e.g., failure to maintain professional boundaries with faculty, peers, and/or clients; over-identification with clients or other behaviors with clients that are carried out for personal gain).
6. Engaging in behavior that renders the student ineligible for licensing in the State of Georgia, for membership in the National Association of Social Workers, or for certification by the National Association of Social Workers.
7. Failure to meet the professional standards of conduct and behavior that are outlined in the MSW Student Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct must be signed by all MSW students before they begin classes in the MSW Program.
8. A student's failure to make changes in conduct and/or behavior that are mandated and specified in a Student Development Plan. The Student Development Plan is a formal, signed document in which remedial actions on the part of a student are deemed to be warranted. A student's failure to complete all requirements of the Student Development Plan by a set completion date may result in a student's dismissal from his/her program of study.

Policy on Academic Honesty

(Approved February 2006) (Revised January 2018 & April 2018)

What is Academic Honesty?

The Social Work Department's view of academic honesty is supported by the VSU MSW Program Goals (2017-2018):

1. To prepare and graduate advanced generalist social workers who employ proactive, reflective, responsive and evidence based and accepted social work practice methods with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
2. To prepare and graduate students who practice from a value-oriented, strength-based perspective that addresses issues of oppression, poverty, diversity, and inclusion.

3. To prepare and graduate students who advocate for human rights, social, economic, and environmental justice, at local, national, and global levels.
4. To graduate students whose practice is based on a firm grounding in social work values and a strong professional social work identity.
5. To ensure the values, knowledge and skills of our graduates are congruent with the continually changing practice environment; changes which includes both advances in social work knowledge and practices as well as the changing milieu of local, state, national, and international communities.
6. To facilitate growth of the program to meet the needs of client systems, expand diversity and international perspectives, increase global connections and understanding
7. To acknowledge, reflect and act on our changing milieu to stay current in meeting the needs of our students and community.

These goals are operationalized through course assignments, courses, the field, and the implicit curriculum. MSW students express these goals through their professional knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes. The Social Work Program's view of Academic honesty is that addressing academic honesty has ethical, educational, and professional gatekeeping functions. To clarify the difference between minor and major issues, the Social Work Program presents two tiers for addressing violations of academic honesty.

Tier One can be summarized by the following, from the VSU Academic Honesty Policy & Procedures webpage (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-honesty-policies-and-procedures.php>) (Updated February 2, 2017)

Cheating and plagiarism are academic integrity violations. Additional violations may be added as deemed appropriate. The following academic integrity violations are not to be considered all-inclusive:

1. No student shall use or attempt to use unauthorized materials or devices to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class.
2. No student shall receive or give or attempt to receive or give assistance not authorized by the instructor in the preparation of an essay, laboratory report, examination or other assignment included in any academic course.
3. No student shall take or attempt to take, steal, or otherwise procure in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the conduct of a class, including but not limited to tests, examinations, laboratory equipment, and roll books.
4. No student shall sell, give, lend, or otherwise furnish to any unauthorized person material which can be shown to contain the questions or answers to any examinations scheduled to be given at any subsequent date in any course of study offered by the University, without authorization from the University.
5. No student shall engage in plagiarism, which is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were the student's own. Essays, term papers, laboratory reports, tests, online writing assignments, and other similar requirements must be the work of the student submitting them. Some typical examples of plagiarism are:

- Submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work when, in fact, it is at least partly or entirely the work of another.
- Submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source.
- Incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit, e.g., when direct quotations are used, they must be indicated, and when the ideas of another are incorporated in the paper they must be appropriately acknowledged.

In the MSW program policies regarding academic honesty extend to student representations of client interviews, client interactions, and staff/field instructor interactions at practicum agencies. Students are expected to report such interactions honestly, ethically, and professionally.

Tier Two violations may be summarized as improperly citing the work of others.

Consider the difference between buying a paper that you turn in as your own work and forgetting to put “quotation marks” around a piece of text you have cited from another writer. Both are examples of plagiarism, but the first is a Tier One Violation, the second a Tier Two Violation. Tier Two errors may be attributed to poor and sloppy writing and citations.

Departmental Responses to Violations of Academic Integrity

Based on the goal of assisting students in becoming the best social workers possible, all responses to academic misconduct will contain both an academic and an administrative component. The MSW program’s response to violations of academic integrity will align with VSU’s responses. (<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-honesty-policies-and-procedures.php>) (Updated February 2, 2017).

Tier One Responses

Academic and Educational Responses

- I. Clarifying for the student the importance of the particular skill pertaining to the violation
- II. Exploring the root cause of the academic violation with the student
 - Student workload /Time management
 - Student lack of knowledge, preparation, skills or values
 - Intentional violation
 - Other
- III. Teaching the student the knowledge and skills involved in addressing the violation
- IV. Giving the student further assignments/exams to reinforce the knowledge and skills associated with the violation.

Administrative Responses

- These will be based on:
- The severity of the violations
- The frequency of the violations
- These responses may range from:
 - The least severe administrative response to a Tier One violation would a zero (0) on the particular assignment.
 - The most severe administrative response that can be administered for a violation is an “F” in that particular course.
<https://www.valdosta.edu/academics/academic-affairs/academic-honesty-policies-and-procedures.php> (Revised Feb 2, 2017).
- Faculty may incorporate administrative responses anywhere within this range, and these must be clearly written in their syllabus.
- Based on the severity and/or frequency of the violation, the faculty may Complete a VSU Academic Integrity Report and supporting documents and submit to the Valdosta State University, Student Conduct Office in the Dean of Students Office.

These Academic/Educational and Administrative responses will be carried out by the student, course instructor, and the student’s assigned academic advisor, and will be clearly documented in a Student Development plan. If the instructor is an adjunct, the advisor or field liaison may take a more active role in initiating these responses and the Student Development plan. The Student Development Plan will elaborate on the consequences of further violations and further violations may include removing the student from the MSW program.

Tier Two Responses

Academic and Educational Responses

- I. Clarifying for the student the importance of the particular skill pertaining to the violation
- II. Exploring the root cause of the academic violation with the student
 - Student workload /Time management
 - Student lack of knowledge, preparation, skills or values
 - Intentional violation
 - Other
- III. Teaching the student the knowledge and skills involved in addressing the violation
- IV. Giving the student further assignments/exams to reinforce the knowledge and skills associated with the violation.

Administrative Responses

These will be based on:

- The severity of the violation (For example, missing a comma in a citation is not as serious as not having any citations)
- The frequency of the violation (The third time a student fails to paraphrase is more serious than the first time they fail to paraphrase).

Responses may include:

- The first Tier Two Violation will result in a loss of points on the assignment/exam, and creation of a Student Development Plan. The faculty's policy for Tier Two violations must be clearly written in their syllabus.

* Repeated Tier Two Violations may be elevated to a Tier One Violation. For example, a student who fails to paraphrase in two classes during their first semester in the program and continues to fail to paraphrase in two classes during their second semester may become subject to Tier One Administrative Responses. The consequences for Repeated Tier Two Violations must be documented in the Student Development Plan.

These Academic/Educational and Administrative responses will be carried out by the student, course instructor, and the student's assigned academic advisor, and will be clearly documented in a Student Development plan. If the instructor is an adjunct, the advisor or field liaison may take a more active role in initiating these responses and the Student Development plan.

Valdosta State University's Office of Student Conduct

In addition to the Social Work Department's Student Development Plan and Academic Review/Special Advising Meetings, Valdosta State University's Office of Student Conduct provides resources for the Social Work Department that promote VSU's values of community, and commitment to civility, integrity and citizenship. Three of these resources are the Student Conduct Incident Report, Academic Integrity Report and the Behavior Intervention Team. See <https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/>

Student Conduct Incident Report

A Student Conduct Incident Report (SCIR) may be completed online by VSU students, faculty and staff, and is reviewed by the VSU Conduct Office Administrator. SCIRs are not anonymous. To make an anonymous report, call VSU Police at (229) 333-7816. Student Conduct Incident Reports may be completed in the event of disturbing or threatening behavior on or off campus (SCIRs may also be completed for events in Field Practicum). SCIRs may also be made to report medical or other emergencies that happen in the classroom, field or on or off campus at VSU. However, for emergencies, first contact 911 or VSU emergency (229-259-5555). SCIRs are for those involved to report the details of the incident after it occurs.

For the Social Work Program students and personnel, the Student Conduct Incident Report (SCIR) provides documentation to VSU in addition to the Student Development Plan. With the Student Conduct Incident Report, the VSU Office of Student Conduct can take action, and inform and support the Social Work Program in promoting environments conducive to learning. (<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/our-services.php>).

Academic Integrity Report

In addition to the Social Work Department Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures and Student Development Plans, incidences of academic dishonesty (on/off campus and in field placement) may be reported to the VSU Office of Student Conduct. With the VSU Academic Integrity Report, VSU can take action, and inform and support the Social Work Department in providing conducive learning environments and promoting the VSU core values of community, integrity, civility and citizenship.

(<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/our-services.php>)

Behavioral Intervention Team

Valdosta State University has a Behavioral Intervention Team (BIT). A report may be submitted online to the Behavioral Intervention Team after a disruptive or threatening incident has occurred. BIT reports may be made anonymously, and may be made about disruptive or threatening behaviors from students or VSU employees including faculty. The Behavioral Intervention Team consists of representatives from VSU University Police, Housing, Human Resources, Academic Affairs, Student Conduct and the Counseling Center. Reports to B.I.T. will be investigated and action will be taken to ensure safety and security on and off campus (included field placements). By submitting a B.I.T. report, the B.I.T. can take action and inform and support the Social Work Program. (<http://www.valdosta.edu/administration/student-affairs/student-conduct-office/our-services.php>)

A B.I.T. report, a Student Incident Report and an MSW Program Student Development Plan may all be initiated and utilized for a disruptive and threatening incident or a pattern of behaviors. All may be used to document incidents and develop plans of action for students.

Social Work Program Student Grievance Procedure

Conflict resolution is a natural part of all group living. It is the intention of the faculty of the Department of Social Work to teach and model positive conflict resolution processes and it is our expectation that students who are being educated as professional social workers will learn to resolve differences of opinion with colleagues, faculty members and their social work peers in accordance with the standards of ethical and professional practice reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics (2017). Additionally, students are expected to learn the skills and standards involved in conflict resolution when more serious disagreements arise. In the event that usual processes communication do not result in the positive resolution of a conflict, students and faculty members may invoke an additional attempt to solve problems. This is a listing of VSU offices and resources for students that address these issues.

VSU's Non-Discrimination Policy

Valdosta State University is committed to maintaining a fair and respectful environment for living, working and studying, and prohibits any member of the faculty, staff, administration, or student body from discriminating against any other member of the University community because of that person's race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic or national origin, religion, age, disabled status, or status as a disabled veteran. For more information on VSU's Non-Discrimination Policy

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/policies/documents/non-discrimination.pdf>

Sexual Misconduct and Title IX

Valdosta State University is committed to ensuring a safe learning environment that supports the dignity of all members of the Valdosta State University community. Valdosta State University (VSU) does not discriminate on the basis of sex or gender in any of its education or employment programs and activities. The University prohibits specific forms of behavior that violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. Valdosta State University will not tolerate sexual misconduct, which is prohibited, and which includes, but is not limited to, domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, and stalking. See VSU's Policy on Sexual Misconduct:

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/social-equity/documents/sexual-misconduct-and-title-ix-policy.pdf>

Any person including faculty, staff, students, or visitors may report what they believe to be an act of discrimination or harassment to the Office of Social Equity as soon as possible after the alleged incident(s). Students wishing to file complaints concerning sexual misconducting such as harassment or discrimination should contact: Dr. Maggie J. Viverette, Director of the Office of Social Equity, 1208 N. Patterson St., Valdosta, GA 31698, Phone: (229) 333-5463, Email: mviveret@valdosta.edu

THE FOLLOWING STEPS ARE A SUPPLEMENT TO VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY'S STATEMENT ON SEXUAL MISCONDUCT.

If Sexual Misconduct occurs at the Practicum Site:

1. Student will consult with the field instructor, faculty liaison, or practice seminar leader. If the allegation is made against the field instructor, the student will bring the situation to the attention of the field liaison. Those involved will engage in problem-solving to determine how to best resolve the situation. If, however, it is felt that no resolution can be effected:
2. Field Liaison notifies the Director of Field Instruction, and Social Work Program Director, and Chair of the Department of Human Services.
3. A meeting will be set up between the field instructor or other representative of the agency, if deemed appropriate, field liaison and other faculty members if deemed appropriate, and the student.

4. A more detailed plan of action will be outlined to resolve the situation at the practicum site. If resolution is impossible, a change in practicum assignment may be necessary.
5. To the extent possible, information dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct will be handled by the Office of Social Equity. In the event of any conflict between this policy and institutional policy on the subject of sexual harassment, the institutional policy shall be applied.

VSU'S Access Office

VSU'S Access Office facilitates equal access to campus programs and activities for all students while upholding the academic standards of Valdosta State University. Students requiring classroom accommodations or modifications because of a documented disability should submit a request for accommodations with VSU's Access Office. If you are a student who has not previously been diagnosed with a disability but are experiencing barriers suspected to be due to a disability that has not previously been identified you can also contact VSU's Access Office to discuss your concerns and for them to recommend resources that might be helpful. For more information, students can visit the [VSU Access Office website](#) or call the Director Rebecca Taylor at 229-245-2498 (229-219-1348 for TTY). The Access Office is in Farbar Hall, 1500 N. Patterson St. Valdosta, Georgia 31698.

Safety Concerns

Safety concerns should always be taken seriously by students in the MSW Program. The University Police Office is located on the second floor of the Campus Parking Deck on N. Oak Street (near the Education Center). Many students choose to enter the Campus Police Emergency Number in their cellphones: **Police Emergency Number 259-5555; University Police Office Number: 333-7816.**

Student Organizations in the Social Work Program

By its nature, the profession of social work involves building relationships, both professional and personal. We believe the ability to network is among the most important skills a social worker will need. Much work is done in classes and practicum to enhance these skills. Also, many students benefit from mutual support. Finally, developing a quality resume is important to any professional. With these concerns in mind, we developed the Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO) as well as an honor society for graduating students.

MSW students are also represented in campus organizations, and are members of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). MSW faculty assist students in networking in the MSW program, Human Services Department, College of Education & Human Services, Valdosta State University, and professional social work communities.

The Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO)

The Graduate Social Work Organization (GSWO) was formed in 1999 as an organization for students in the MSW program at Valdosta State University. Its purpose is to promote camaraderie and exchange between students at all levels in the MSW program. All social work

students in the program are members of GSWO. There is no fee for membership. The GSWO consists of an Executive Committee with elected officers-President and Treasurer, Vice President for Web hybrid cohort, Vice President for Face to Face cohort, Secretaries for Web hybrid and face to face cohorts as well as representatives from all web hybrid and face to face class sections as well as part-time and Advanced Standing representatives. The GSWO officers and representatives participate in VSU MSW program governance by attending MSW program faculty meetings, serving on departmental and university committees, surveying the students through online surveys to gather data for formulating and modifying MSW program policies and programs. With consultation from the GSWO advisers and MSW faculty, the GSWO members, officers and representatives decide which service, community and fundraising projects the organization will do. Since 2010 activities have included successful Relay for Life teams, participating in the Valdosta Christmas parade and VSU homecoming, organizing the MSW ceremony at graduation, collecting food, toys and clothing for needy families in South Georgia, organizing Continuing Education presentations and luncheons for students and community social workers, presenting at local, state and national conferences, and producing a monthly newsletter *The VSU Social Worker*.

Graduating MSW students who have served on the GSWO Executive Committee anytime during their MSW Program of Study are acknowledged at the MSW Graduation Celebration.

Valdosta State University, MSW Honor Society

Since 1999 the Valdosta State University (VSU), MSW program has participated in Social Work Honor Societies. In Spring 2015 the honor society graduates decided to establish the Valdosta State University, MSW Honor Society. The Valdosta State University, MSW Honor Society has no dues for membership and the 2015 honor society members selected red, black and citron for the honor society colors as well as the design of the honor cords. Members of the VSU, MSW Program Honor Society are selected on the basis of having high GPAs in the MSW program and making an application to the faculty for membership. Students may apply for membership the semester of their graduation. A Call for Applications will be emailed to the students early in January or February of each year. Qualified and selected VSU MSW Program Honor Society graduates are sent email invitations to the honor society before April 10 during their graduating semester.

MSW Honors & Awards

The VSU MSW faculty also nominates and awards graduating MSW students for awards from the College of Education & Human services. These awards are often based on student and community leadership, perseverance and impact in research, practice and policy. Awarded student names are announced at the VSU MSW Graduation Ceremony.

Also, at the VSU MSW Graduation Ceremony student graduating with a 4.0 in the MSW program are acknowledged in the ceremony program and during the ceremony.

MSW Scholarships

MSW students may also apply for the Ahleida B. Seever, Carson Mclane and Louise Stanford Chastain scholarships that are offered for MSW students. MSW students are also eligible for other scholarships offered in the College of Education & Human Services. See the Social work faculty serving on the COEHS Scholarship and Honors Committee for more information. In addition, graduate students can apply for assistantships that available through the VSU Graduate School.

VSU Email and VSU 1Card

VSU Email

[The Division of Information Technology Services](#) provides guides and instructions on how to get started with accessing VSU email and other technological resources available at VSU. VSU email login is needed to access various resources such as BlazeView the online learning system and to purchase your [parking](#) permit online.

VSU 1Card

<https://www.valdosta.edu/administration/finance-admin/auxiliary-services/1-card-services/obtaining-a-vs-u-1card.php> Take note of the need to submit a photo online to get started on obtaining your VSU 1 card.

Students ID's (1Card's) are produced during orientation and registration in the VSU 1Card Office in Langdale Hall. Everyone must provide a form of photo identification to have a VSU 1Card produced. The VSU 1Card is the property of Valdosta State University and must be in a student's possession at all times. The first VSU 1Card is produced at no charge to the cardholder, however, a replacement fee is charged when the card is damaged, lost, or stolen. The VSU 1Card is required to access your residence hall, dining privileges, [library](#) materials, [health services](#), access to athletic events, and testing.

SECTION 6: SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND LICENSES

National Association of Social Workers

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers. NASW-GA <https://www.naswga.org/> promotes the image and interests of professional social workers and the people served by them. Georgia's social workers practice in a variety of settings including family service agencies, community mental health centers, hospitals, employee assistance programs, schools, and public and private agencies.

Student Membership (BSW or MSW) For details on NASW student membership for those currently matriculating in a Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work degree program, or a program eligible for candidacy go to the following webpage <https://www.socialworkers.org/membership/membership-types/students>

The NASW Code of Ethics: The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics is available through the following link <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics>. Students are responsible for reading the most current version of the Code.

In addition to NASW, many social workers also belong to other professional groups that represent their areas of work. For example, [School Social Workers Association of America](#).

Apart from participating in professional associations, the Social Work Program strongly recommends obtaining the LMSW license (in Georgia, and then the LCSW) as soon as possible to allow for the greatest possible career opportunities. The licensing process may vary by state. Useful resources include:

- (1) **NASW-GA Licensure Statement:** <https://www.naswga.org/licensure>
- (2) [Social Work Licensure – A State-By-State Guide](#)

LMSW and LCSW LICENSES

Social work is a licensed profession in Georgia Licensure oversight is provided by [The Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists](#)
Social Workers are licensed at two levels:

- 1) Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW): After graduating with your MSW, you submit your application for licensure to the Composite Board, and get their approval to take the ASWB Masters exam, you obtain a license that will allow you to work in a clinical setting under supervision by a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW). You will qualify to take the LMSW examination immediately upon Graduation with an MSW degree.
- 2) Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW): After obtaining approval from the Composite Board to work under supervision of an LCSW for a specified number of years to gain experience and hours of supervision, you get approval to take the clinical exam and if you pass it, get certified as an LCSW.

REFERENCE

Council on Social Work Education. (2015). *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards*. Retrieved October 3, 2020 from https://www.cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Accreditation-Process/2015-EPAS/2015EPAS_Web_FINAL.pdf.aspx.