



# **MSW Program Handbook**

*Revised January 2024*

## MSW Program Handbook

This handbook is intended to be a resource and guide for MSW students as you engage with your learning community and academic progression. We encourage all MSW students to understand the policies and procedures within the University as well as within the School of Social Work. Please also reference the [Student Conduct Code](#) and the [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#).

Our program policies are ever evolving. With this in mind, the information is subject to change and the School of Social Work will update this handbook often. The handbook is not intended to be and should not be regarded as a contract between the Colorado State University School of Social Work and any student or other person. The most current CSU General Catalog/Graduate Bulletin is the guiding policy authority.

As questions arise for you, our team is here to offer support and guidance. Please reach out to a member of the MSW team with any questions, feedback, or concerns.

## Message from the Director



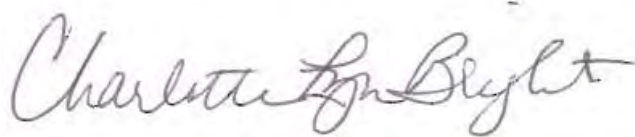
I am thrilled to welcome you to a passionate group of dynamic learners and leaders! By choosing to pursue your graduate education in the School of Social Work, you join the ranks of influential practitioners, advocates, and thinkers who gain skills to address individual challenges, promote strengths and resilience, and dismantle structural oppression. The School of Social Work at CSU is noted for its outstanding students and its exceptional faculty. We emphasize cutting-edge, experiential learning based upon scientific inquiry and social work ethics, responsive to ever-changing local and global contexts.

Through its advanced generalist focus, our MSW program prepares graduates to engage in practice, leadership, critical thinking, and lifelong learning.

We are proud that our MSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and has been in place for over 30 years. Social work is an expanding, in-demand profession with diverse career possibilities across many sectors of practice.

Students at the School of Social Work come to the classroom with work or personal experiences that enrich class discussions. The faculty are international experts in areas including behavioral health, child welfare, equity and inclusion, social policy, and human-animal interventions. They bring knowledge from their research and practice to support social change and academic excellence.

From the bottom of my heart, I welcome you to our learning community. I wish you the very best now and throughout your social work career.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Charlotte Lyn Bright".

Charlotte Lyn Bright, PhD, MSW  
Director and Professor, School of Social Work

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## School of Social Work History

Throughout its history, the School of Social Work (SOSW) at Colorado State University has made a continuous effort to develop and maintain a program that is responsive to three distinct, but related, interests: 1) the profession of social work as represented by the Council on Social Work Education's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards; 2) the human services agencies and clients in the state, the region, the nation, and the globe; and 3) the land-grant oriented mission and goals of Colorado State University. The following abbreviated history of social work education at Colorado State demonstrates how these three interests have merged to create and shape the social work education programs offered today.

In the mid-1960s, the U.S. government initiated a program (administered by state social services agencies) to increase the supply of social workers by making funds available through Title XX of the Social Security Act (and predecessor legislation) designed to encourage universities to create baccalaureate-level social work education programs. Although Colorado State University (CSU) had previously offered a few social work courses in its Department of Sociology, these courses did not constitute a program that would prepare a graduate for social work practice. In 1968, the Colorado Department of Social Services and CSU entered an agreement to create a full baccalaureate social work major that would be housed in the Department of Sociology, delivered by a faculty of professional social workers, and funded with Title XX funds supporting 75% of the program costs. The agreement anticipated that the cost of operating the program would gradually shift to the university and by 1977 it would be fully funded by CSU. A total of 150 students initially declared the social work major, and the first graduating class received the BA in social work in 1971.

In 1970, the Council on Social Work Education initiated a process of accreditation for baccalaureate social work education by granting "approval" status to 151 schools that met the established criteria. CSU was one of the first universities to attain that national recognition. Four years later "approval" was upgraded to professional "accreditation," and again, CSU was among the first 135 baccalaureate social work education programs to achieve full accreditation – which has been maintained continuously since that time. Enrollment surged to a high of 375 majors during the mid-1970s, and it was necessary to cap the major at 325 students because new resident instruction resources were devoted to taking over the agreed-upon increasing percentage of program costs rather than funding new faculty positions to meet the growing student demand. In the 1980s, the stated goal of the Reagan administration to dismantle public human services discouraged students from majoring in social work (both at CSU and throughout the United States), and the number of majors at CSU dropped below the cap to as few as 177 in the mid-1980s.

In 1976 an outreach innovation was introduced aimed primarily at assisting public social services workers to improve their competencies and credentials. Again, making use of federal funds available through Title XX, a distance education program was developed, designed to help persons who possessed baccalaureate degrees in other disciplines obtain a "second bachelor's degree" in social work. Achieving this second bachelor's degree also allowed these students to complete a master's degree in social work in a reduced period (i.e., advanced standing) in many MSW programs throughout the United States.

By that time, the new department's programs were completely funded by the university, and plans were initiated to create a master's level social work education program (MSW). It was determined that the

second bachelor's degree would be phased out and its resources devoted to developing the MSW. At that time, no MSW programs existed in the states of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, or South Dakota and the only other accredited social work education program in Colorado was the MSW program offered at The University of Denver (DU). The MSW program at DU was primarily oriented to specialized social work practice delivered in the Denver metropolitan area, and the tuition at that private university was viewed as prohibitive by many potential social work students. Given CSU's land-grant mission to serve people throughout Colorado, the recognized needs of the neighboring states that did not offer the MSW, and the desire to avoid direct competition with DU, the proposed MSW program was oriented to preparing advanced generalist social workers especially capable of responding to the human services needs of small towns and rural areas or communities that were undergoing rapid transition (e.g., energy boom/bust towns, urban sprawl). That focus was later expanded to include preparation to serve residents in urban areas, especially along the Front Range.

**In July 1984 the MSW program was approved by the Colorado Commission on Higher Education and in June 1985 it was accepted into candidacy for accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education. Eligibility for initial accreditation was achieved in 1986, and fully accredited status was granted in 1992. The first class of 18 master's level graduates received their degrees in 1986.**

CSU School of Social Work expanded to outreach efforts by admitting a cohort of 27 students living in the Western Slope to the MSW program in 1998. Students took their graduate courses in Grand Junction over a four-year period. The first Western Slope class earned MSW degrees in May 2002. Distance education in southwest Colorado continued and in January 2010, the first Central Colorado MSW cohort was admitted. The Central MSW program was initiated in response to a growing demand for our weekend distance MSW from across the state of Colorado and beyond. The Central cohort held classes in Thornton and graduated in December 2012. In January 2015, distance programs were converted to a hybrid model with much of the class experience offered in an online format while two weekends per semester are required for face-to-face classroom experiences. Now, our distance program option offers three cohorts along the front range using primarily online education, with five learning weekends throughout the 3-year part-time program.

To continue to meet the needs of students and the community, the School of Social Work piloted an Advanced Standing program for students with BSW degrees from undergraduate social work programs accredited by the CSWE. Approximately 15-25 students with BSW degrees from accredited schools are admitted each year since.

Consistent with its roots in supporting human services agencies, the CSU School of Social Work has devoted considerable effort to outreach activities. Substantial collaborations have been in the areas of research, curriculum development for and provision of statewide training to county child welfare and child protection workers. In 2002, the name of the Department of Social Work was officially changed to the School of Social Work to more accurately reflect the increased breadth of activities across national and international arenas.

In 2006, the Social Work Center for Lifelong Learning and Outreach Education (CLOE) was established. The Center for Life-Long Learning, Outreach, and Education develops, administers Graduate Certificate programs of the School of Social Work. The Center provides oversight to maintain high quality programs that are consistent with the mission and goals of the School of Social Work, the College of Health and Human Sciences, and Colorado State University. CLOE fosters increased faculty and student involvement



in community improvement as resources for social workers and human service personnel, providing lifelong learning opportunities, and engaging alumni in both providing and participating in the educational opportunities offered by the Center.

In 2011, the CSU Board of Governors approved a PhD Program in Social Work replacing our successful interdisciplinary PhD collaboration with the School of Education.

The programs of the Colorado State University School of Social Work have reflected continuing responsiveness to the needs and interests of the region, the profession of social work, and the University. The School of Social Work is currently one of nine academic units in the College of Health and Human Sciences that make practical application of knowledge and skills to address the needs of people.

## The School of Social Work

### Vision

The School of Social Work will advance social, environmental, and economic justice, promote equity and equality, alleviate oppression, and enhance human health and well-being across local and global community systems.

### Mission

The School of Social Work prepares leaders who demonstrate excellence in practice, research, advocacy, and community engagement across local and global settings. Our learning community strives to be anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and liberatory.

### Guiding Principles

1. The School stands for courageous and resolute adherence to professional ethics and values by honoring commitments and upholding the highest standards of academic and scientific integrity.
2. The School is committed to academic rigor, seeking to define and address emerging social challenges through interdisciplinary collaboration and critical inquiry that inspires innovation.
3. The School respects, honors, and values individual differences and diverse ideas. Using a lens of intersectionality, each person is treated with dignity, care, and respect.
4. The School cultivates a trusting and transparent environment through inclusive planning and decision-making with full, accurate, and timely communication of information.
5. The School proactively responds to emerging trends and issues through social engagement and experiential learning, which are integrated in all aspects of our teaching, research, and service.

### Core Values

1. **Integrity**
  - a. Uncompromising adherence to professional ethics and principles
  - b. Cultivating or demonstrating trust and honesty in how we relate to each other / in all encounters and situations
  - c. Awareness of how we interact with one another as human beings – this means, to be honest, trust the good intentions of our colleagues, show up authentically
  - d. The courage to stand where you're standing and the tenacity to hold what you believe
  - e. Professional and personal
2. **Transparency --- alternatively, Open and Inclusive**
  - a. Clear, open, honest communication
  - b. Inclusion in decision-making
  - c. Full, accurate, timely disclosure of information
  - d. Group power and group decision-making, in terms of how we operate as a group and how we teach empowerment
  - e. Courage
3. **Respect**
  - a. Dignity, worth
  - b. Unconditional positive regard
4. **Empathy**
  - a. Compassion
5. **Innovative Excellence**

- a. Moving forward with a spirit of scientific inquiry, teaching innovation, and a broader view of “what belongs” to Social Work
  - b. Passionate, systematic curiosity and inquiry
  - c. Inspiring innovation in our students
  - d. Academic excellence; thinking differently about problems and solutions
  - e. Recognizing how we act within larger systems and seeking interdisciplinary collaborations – Integrated thinking, ecosystems perspective
  - f. Being relevant, timely, and responsive
  - g. Integrated knowledge
  - h. Community of knowledge seekers
  - i. Passionate curiosity
6. **Social Action / Service / Active Engagement** (or Framework or Lens)
- a. Unwavering commitment to creating change
  - b. ACTING towards or in the spirit of social justice
  - c. Commitment to action, to improvement, to change
  - d. Bring change agents
  - e. Being responsive to changing landscapes; being aware of constantly changing contexts/variables and fluid in our responses

#### **School of Social Work Pronoun Commitment**

**As outlined in the Principles of Community, the School of Social Work commits to:**

- Supporting SSW community members in sharing pronouns in all introductions if comfortable doing so
- Using affirming pronouns in all interactions
- Continuously fostering gender-inclusive environments throughout the school year in the classroom and department spaces.
- Including the CSU Pronoun Statement in all syllabi

**We also commit to holding our community accountable by:**

- Supporting students to bring forward concerns about the misuse of pronouns
- Offering avenues for restorative justice as desired by impacted individuals. Impacted individuals can choose a staff member to support them through restorative justice within the School of Social Work, or at the university level (bias reporting or restorative justice programs at the university). Restorative justice includes but is not limited to creating opportunities for mediated conversations, learning opportunities, and/or apologies.
- Calling in members of the School of Social Work community and guests.
- Ensuring instructors and students follow the School of Social Work Pronoun Commitment and facilitate gender-safe environments.
- Nurturing an inclusive School of Social Work community to move toward a brighter future for transgender, non-binary, gender non-conforming, and gender diverse persons.

**Organizational Chart**

Please find a current organizational chart online [on our Organizational Chart web page.](#)

## MSW Program

### MSW Program Mission

The mission for the MSW program at CSU is to prepare versatile leaders for professional, ethical Advanced Generalist practice in complex, diverse, and dynamic contexts. The School will provide cutting-edge, experiential education, based upon scientific inquiry, that is responsive to evolving needs of local and global communities.

### MSW Degree Requirements

Requirements for the MSW degree include the completion of 64 credits for two-year MSW students and 39-42 credits for Advanced Standing students. All work for the Master of Social Work degree must be completed within seven years. Other general requirements for the Master of Social Work degree are the same as those established by The Graduate School and in accordance with accreditation standards established by the Council on Social Work Education. Students should reference the Graduate School Bulletin for further policy information.

**Please note, the School of Social Work does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.**

During the concentration year of study, students are responsible for completing Graduate School forms for degree completion. The forms are accessible through the Graduate School website and students will receive notification emails with timelines and instructions from the Graduate School and from MSW program staff. ***Failure to complete the forms correctly or missing deadlines can result in delayed graduation.***

### Program Options

The MSW Program is available as a full-time, part-time, and hybrid-distance program as follows:

- On campus, full-time, Advanced Standing (1 year)
- On campus, full-time (two years)
- On campus, part-time program (three to four years)
- Distance part-time program (three years)
- Distance part-time Advanced Standing (two years)

For current program schedules, please reference your advising and registration guide or the program website.

## Curriculum

The School of Social Work’s curriculum is grounded in the [2015 Educational Policies and Standards \(EPAS\)](#) published by the [Council on Social Work Education](#). Our curriculum will transition to the 2022 EPAS in fall 2025.

*For course descriptions and additional information, please reference the CSU General Catalog*

### Full-time Curriculum Options

#### On-campus Generalist

Generalist (Foundation) Curriculum (2 years)	Credits	Semester
SOWK 500 Principles and Philosophy of Social Work	3	Fall
SOWK 511 Small Systems Practice Skills	3	Fall
SOWK 515 Theoretical Foundations for Social Work	3	Fall
SOWK 520 Social Welfare Policy and Advocacy	3	Spring
SOWK 530 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice	3	Fall
SOWK 588 Generalist Field Placement	6	Spring
SOWK 592 Integrative Foundation Field Seminar	1	Spring
Elective <sup>1</sup>		

#### On-campus Advanced Generalist

Advanced Generalist (Concentration) Curriculum (1 year)	Credits	Semester
SOWK 600 Methods of Research	3	Fall
SOWK 630 Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	3	Fall
SOWK 631 Advanced Community Practice	3	Spring
SOWK 633 Contemporary Issues in Social Welfare Policy	3	Fall
SOWK 634 Advanced Practice with Families and Groups	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Field Placement	15	Varied
SOWK 698 Advanced Research and Social Work Capstone	3	Spring
Elective <sup>2</sup>		

<sup>1</sup> Two year MSW students are required to complete 9 elective credits. Advanced Standing MSW students are required to complete 3 elective credits. Dual degree electives are fulfilled by MPH coursework unless otherwise noted by your Adviser.

## Part-Time Curriculum Options

### On-campus option

#### Year 1 Courses by Semester

Course	Semester
SOWK 500	Fall
SOWK 515	Fall
Elective (or taken in summer)	
SOWK 520	Spring

#### Year 2 Courses by Semester

Course	Semester
SOWK 530	Fall
SOWK 511	Fall
Elective (or taken in summer)	

#### Year 3 Courses by Semester \*\*

Course	Semester
SOWK 633	Fall
SOWK 630	Fall
SOWK 631	Spring
SOWK 634	Spring

#### Year 4 Courses by Semester

Course	Semester
SOWK 600	Fall
SOWK 688	Fall
SOWK 698	Spring
SOWK 688	Spring

\*A total of 9 elective credits is required. Fall electives may be taken during summer term if preferred for academic load. 5 credits are required for summer financial aid, and two electives may be taken concurrently. To complete a graduate certificate an elective should be taken in each semester (fall, spring, and summer) to complete certificate requirements.

\*\*Students may elect to attend concentration courses on a full-time basis during year 3

**Distance or hybrid option**
**3 Year Plan**

## Year 1 Courses by Semester

<b>Course</b>	<b>Semester</b>
SOWK 500 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 515 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 511 (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 530 (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 520 (3 credits)	Fall
SOWK 588 (3 credits) *	Fall

## Year 2 Courses by Semester

<b>Course</b>	<b>Semester</b>
SOWK 631 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 592 (1 credit)	Spring
SOWK 588 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 630 (3 credits)	Summer
Elective (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 633 (3 credits)	Fall
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Fall
Elective (3 credits)	Fall

## Year 3 Courses by Semester

<b>Course</b>	<b>Semester</b>
SOWK 634 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Spring
Elective (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 600 (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Summer
SOWK 698 (3 credits)	Fall
SOWK 688 (varied credits)**	Fall

\* Note 45 field Hours= 1 credit hour; foundation year placement must be 270 field hours (6 credits)

\*\* Note 45 field hours = 1 credit hour; concentration year placement must be 675 Field hours (15 credits). **Placements may be completed in fewer than 4 semesters if desired, as long as 15 credits are completed over a minimum of two semesters.**



## Distance Advanced Standing

### 2 Year Plan

#### Year 1 Courses by Semester

Course	Semester
SOWK 530 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 631 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 630 (3 credits)	Summer
Elective (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 633 (3 credits)	Fall
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Fall
Elective (3 credits)	Fall

#### Year 2 Courses by Semester

Course	Semester
SOWK 634 (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Spring
Elective (3 credits)	Spring
SOWK 600 (3 credits)	Summer
SOWK 688 (variable credits)**	Summer
SOWK 698 (3 credits)	Fall
SOWK 688 (varied credits)**	Fall

\*\* Note 45 field hours = 1 credit hour; concentration year placement must be 675 Field hours (15 credits). **Placements may be completed in fewer than 4 semesters if desired, as long as 15 credits are completed over a minimum of two semesters.**

### **Dual Degree Program: MSW/MPH**

The Colorado State University MSW/MPH program offers the Global Health and Health Disparities concentration. The MSW/MPH provides an integrated approach to preventing, addressing, and solving global health and behavioral health problems, which includes individuals' physical health conditions and the behavioral and social ecological determinants of health. The program has a strong commitment to social justice, the elimination of health, behavioral health, and care disparities, as well as a holistic definition of community and population health and well-being. The discipline draws on both social work and public health research, practice, and theoretical frameworks. The two fields of social work and public health are:

- **Complementary:** Public Health focuses on populations of people and is highly analytical and Social Work focuses on individuals, groups, and communities within the social environment. Both programs heavily emphasize cross-cultural, global content in classes and have an emphasis on social justice.
- **Evidence-based:** The program focuses on contemporary behavioral health and health issues and uses current research on empirically documented successful programs.
- **Health promotion and disease prevention:** Aims to improve global health by promoting well-being and preventing the occurrence of problems, not solely addressing them after they have developed.
- **Multi-method:** Applies all prevention and intervention tools, including research, policy analysis, clinical intervention, and macro and community-based approaches that comprise social work and public health.
- **Trans-disciplinary:** Works with multiple systems, organizations, and professions to reach individuals, groups, communities, and populations globally.
- **Strengths-oriented:** Utilizes multiple approaches to reduce risk, exposure to hazards, and to promote resilience thereby increasing overall well-being.

Both social work and public health share a commitment to involving consumers/community members in the development of policies and in the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health promotion interventions, health behavior change, and health education. For more information about the dual degree program, please visit [the MSW/MPH Program page on our website](#).

\*Please note, this program is only available on campus.

### Elective Options and Graduate Certificate Courses

Students have 3 (advanced standing) or 9 (full-program) elective credits as part of their program of study for the MSW degree. Students can choose interdisciplinary courses or electives offered within the School of Social Work.

The School’s graduate electives are currently available online, as offered through CLOE, the Center for Lifelong Learning, Outreach, and Education. Please note, **online tuition applies and impacts full-time on-campus students differently than part-time or distance students based on the resident tuition benefits, as online courses are not included.** For further information, please review the financial impact info sheet in the appendices or reach out to [Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu](mailto:Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu), as the CLOE Coordinator.

Online Courses may be found/added by searching for the course number on [CSU Online's website](#). The courses below can be taken independently, or as part of a Graduate Certificate Program.

### Conflict Resolution and Mediation

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SOWK 551: Fundamentals of Mediation	Every term
SOWK 552: Health and Eldercare mediation	Varied* (spring of odd years)
SOWK 553: Multiparty mediation	Varied* (fall of even years)
SOWK 554: Workplace Mediation	Varied* (fall of odd years)
SOWK 556: Divorce and Family Mediation	Varied* (spring of even years)

\*\* Contact CLOE Coordinator, [Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu](mailto:Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu), for information on when these courses are offered.

### Advanced Clinical Behavioral Health

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SOWK 678: Social Work Skills for Addictions Practice	Summer
SOWK 676: Psychopharmacology and Community Mental Health	Fall
SOWK 677: Trauma Informed Care	Spring

### PreK-12 School Social Work

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SOWK 560: Social Work Practice in Schools	Spring, Summer (occasional fall)
SOWK 561: School Community: People with Disabilities	Summer
SOWK 551: Fundamentals of Mediation	Every term

### Nonprofit Administration

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SOWK 660: Nonprofit Program Development	Fall
SOWK 661: Nonprofit Financial Development	Spring
SOWK 662: Volunteer Development and Management	Summer

### Social Aspects of Human-Animal Interactions

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SOWK 550: Animal Assisted Therapy and Human-Animal Bond	Fall
SOWK 557: Human-Animal Interventions – Grief and Loss	Summer
SOWK 677: Trauma Informed Care	Spring

**For approved on-campus interdisciplinary electives, please reference the [online list](#).** Additional courses at the 500 level or above may qualify as MSW electives as approved by the MSW Advisor. Please see the [Graduate School Bulletin](#) for additional course and scheduling information.

### **Advising**

Advising is available to support students in their educational and professional development while enrolled in the MSW program, as well as to provide research mentorship. There are two advisor roles within the MSW program: Academic and Professional Advisor and Research Advisor.

### **Academic and Professional Advising**

Sarah Rudisill ([Sarah.Rudisill@colostate.edu](mailto:Sarah.Rudisill@colostate.edu)) is the Academic Advisor for on-campus and distance MSW students. Students are encouraged to take ownership in their learning, and the advisor can be a resource to aid them in meeting their academic goals. Advisors are also available to support your professional development planning and transition to the workforce. Meeting with the MSW advisor is mandatory for dual-degree and part-time students and advising is strongly encouraged for all other students.

### **Advisor Responsibilities**

1. Support the academic and professional development of advisees and communicate with students regarding curriculum policies, procedures, and schedules
2. Orient advisees to the MSW Program and to the wider CSU community
3. Review and approve the plan of study for each advisee
4. Provide guidance to students in their selection and completion of degree-required elective courses
5. Refer students to on-campus resources as needed, such as the CSU Writing Center, specific workshops, Student Case Management Services, etc.
6. Meet with advisees at least once per semester or as requested and be available for additional counsel as needed
7. Provide student/faculty connect events on a quarterly basis

### **Student Responsibilities**

1. Students should initiate contact with the MSW advisor as needed to seek information, assistance, or clarification and to receive support towards professional development. Students should identify areas of concern regarding any aspect of their MSW experience.
2. Students should view their advisor as a resource who can make appropriate referrals to other services as needed.
3. Students are responsible for registration of all courses each semester per their program of study and in alignment with their desired graduation date.
4. Students are ultimately responsible for their plan of study and completion of coursework in proper sequence.
  - a. Students should refer to and use the MSW Advising Checklist as a tool to ensure completion of all required coursework (See Appendix F and utilize the checklist that corresponds with your intended plan for completion of the program).
5. Students should monitor their own educational and academic progress related to their program goals and in alignment with university standards.

## **Research Advising**

During the research capstone course (SOWK 698) your instructor will serve as your Research Advisor, which is a separate role from academic and professional advising. This role is intended to provide project-specific research mentorship and to serve as your advisor of record for the Graduate School regarding required form submissions (GS forms). While the research advisor will support specifically on capstone related activities, the academic advisor will continue to provide guidance throughout the duration of your MSW program.

## **Graduation Requirements**

### **Forms**

During the semester in which the student is enrolled in SOWK 600, the MSW Advisor will send out instructions for completing the program of study form- GS-6. Each student must prepare this form (GS-6), which is the formal statement of what is done to achieve the degree and is the summary of all academic planning. The program of study must be filed with the Graduate School before students can register for their fourth regular semester. Students who fail to meet this requirement may be denied subsequent registration. The Graduate School reviews each GS-6 and determines whether the program of study conforms to University policy and that minimum requirements will be met for the degree. While it is important to plan the Program of Study early in the graduate career, plans may develop and change. Modifications must be formally recorded and the advisor, director, and the Graduate School must approve. Courses which have been taken and for which a grade has been received (A through F, I, S or U) may not be removed from the Program of Study. Changes in program of study or committee membership should be made with extreme care since no additional comprehensive checks are made until the time of graduation (Graduate and Professional Bulletin).

At the beginning of the final semester of the program, students must also complete the GS25 – Application for Graduation. This form places them on the graduation list for that semester and allows them to make any last-minute changes to their program of study. In addition, students must submit a GS24 – Report of Final Examination Results to their research committees during their poster sessions. If the committee approves of the poster session and related research presentation, they will sign the GS24, at which point the student must take it directly to the Graduate School office.

### **Research Requirement**

Our graduate program is a Plan B as recognized and structured by the graduate school. MSW students will complete original research in their SOWK 698 Advanced Research and Social Work Capstone course during their final semester of study and complete a defense. Students interested in a thesis option should review the process below and schedule a meeting with the MSW Advisor.

### **Procedures for the Appointment of Plan B Graduate Committees**

In the final semesters of course work, research faculty identify a committee to support and evaluate student projects. The Plan B research committee consists of three members. The Chairperson of the research committee is the student's SOWK 698 Advanced Research and Social Work Capstone course instructor, who also serves as their research advisor. Of the remaining two members, one must be a social work faculty member and one must be a faculty member from a department/unit outside social work to represent the Graduate School. Committees must receive signatory approval from the Director of the School of Social Work. The recommended Advisory Committee members will be forwarded to the Graduate School for approval. The student's graduate committee has the following responsibilities:

1. Review the student's Program of Study (GS-6) and other required GS forms
2. Guide the process of conducting and completing original research
3. Determine if the research product satisfies the Graduate School and School of Social Work Requirements
4. Develop plans for academic, professional, and career success with the student

### **Field Education**

Field education is the signature pedagogy of MSW education. An overview of field education for your MSW program is provided below – however, please review the [MSW Field Education Program Manual](#) available online.

Consistent with the nature of professional social work practice, students in field are evaluated on all of the program's competencies. Individualized learning situations in the field, combined with field instruction, facilitates student understanding of strengths as well as the identification of areas for continued personal and professional growth. The learning plan serves to direct students in their field placement following the core competencies and practice behaviors to meet the learning goals and objectives as students integrate their classroom learning and field experiences. These practice behaviors provide opportunities for students to engage in generalist practice (MSW Foundation) and advanced generalist practice (MSW Concentration) and demonstrate proficiency with the required competencies. Students operationalize the practice behaviors through identifying specific tasks and responsibilities in their field placements.

The field education program at CSU utilizes Tevera software to support placement planning, all field-related documentation, student evaluations, and other communications. Students will receive information on purchasing their one-time Tevera license (course material) for the duration of their time at CSU as they begin the field placement process.

Students are informed of criteria for evaluating their performance in field via the field education syllabi, orientation, learning plan, and the evaluations, which measure student performance with respect to the program competencies and practice behaviors. Formal policies regarding the NASW Code of Ethics, background check policy, problems in field, procedures for grievances, and evaluation of student performance are documented in the field education materials. These criteria are reviewed in field orientation and discussed in the field education materials for students, field instructors, on-site supervisors, and the affiliated agencies in the field education program.

### **MSW Field Education/Internship Requirements**

Important policy and procedure information regarding Field Education is detailed in the Field Education Manual. **To be eligible for field education, students must be in good standing with the School of Social Work and the University.** Students seeking to regain good standing status should consult with their advisor before applying for field.

The purpose of field education is to provide supervised practice experiences that support students' integration of social work knowledge, values, skills, and practice behaviors within the framework of the needs and goals of client systems, host agencies and their communities. Field placements afford each student an individualized learning situation, which, through guided instruction, formulates the students' understanding of their strengths and identifies areas for continual personal and professional growth.

Field education with a generalist or advanced generalist perspective must encompass learning opportunities that address Social Work Core Competencies as specified by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the School of Social Work. Core Competencies describe performance outcomes that are characterized by measurable practice behaviors, which are then operationalized through the curriculum of the School of the School of Social Work. The Field Education Program provides students an opportunity to integrate knowledge, values and skills within the CSWE Core Competencies and corresponding practice behaviors in a supervised and monitored practice setting.

Individual interviews with the Director of Field and/or the Field Education Coordinators are held in the semester before students enter the field. Using Tevera, students explore existing agency partnerships to identify their learning experiences and practice settings of interest. In accordance with the recommendation of the Council on Social Work Education, **no academic credit is given in whole or in part, for life experience and/or previous work experiences in lieu of the field practicum.** In many placement agencies, one or more of the following may be required of students requesting placement:

- Immunization records and updates;
- Criminal arrest background check through Colorado Bureau of Investigation;
- Central Registry check for child abuse charges;
- Drug and alcohol testing; and/or
- Driving record

If the results of a background check are determined as negative by the placement agency, placement by that agency may be denied to the student. A degree in social work cannot be obtained without completing the field education component of the program.

The School of Social Work considers student safety a priority in the Field Placement. Required orientations occur at the start of each Field Placement where safety information and risk management is reviewed. Please see the Field Education Manual for policies, procedures and criteria supporting student safety.

### **Generalist Field Placement (2-year MSW Students, SOWK 588)**

In the foundation field placement, students are assigned to selected agencies in order to provide each student with an opportunity to apply and integrate classroom knowledge, skills and values to practice skills. Students complete 270 clock hours in the agency under the supervision of an MSW practitioner (from an accredited MSW program) with at least two years of post-graduate experience. The Foundation Field Placement experience is designed in such a way that students will have opportunities to demonstrate the Core Competencies as specified by the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (CSWE-EPAS). All social work students complete an approved field placement during their degree program. At the beginning of the semester prior to the field placement term, students must attend a scheduled Application Meeting, which provides an overview of the field application process, procedures, required orientation information, as well as information about the field software (course materials purchased one time) required for all field experiences. The placement process for students in field agencies is an important part of the field education program and marks the beginning of the field experience.

### **Advanced Generalist Field Placement (All MSW Students, SOWK 688)**

In the concentration field placement, students are placed in settings in which they can develop advanced practice competencies and skills. The ideal setting offers students opportunities to work with multiple client system levels. Students are expected to implement advanced generalist social work knowledge, values, and skills as defined in the CSWE-EPAS Core Competencies. To successfully complete the concentration field practicum, students complete 675 clock hours of agency work under the supervision of an MSW practitioner (from an accredited MSW program) with at least two years of post-graduate experience.

All social work students complete an approved field placement during their degree program. At the beginning of the semester prior to the field placement term, students must review field application material provided by their Field Coordinator, which provides an overview of the field application process, procedures, required orientation information, as well as information about the field software (course materials purchased one time) required for all field experiences. The placement process for students in field agencies is an important part of the field education program and marks the beginning of the field experience.

### **MSW MPH Dual Degree Internships**

Students enrolled in the dual degree program will be required to follow the Field Placement processes and invited to participate in the MPH orientation at the start of their program. This orientation includes an initial meeting with the Field Director and MSW Field Coordinator to review and explain the process of engaging and participating in the field education program and processes. Dual degree students are required to fulfill additional public health requirements as part of the public health competencies and standards.

### **Graduate Enrollment Requirement and Continuous Registration**

All graduate students at Colorado State University are required to be continuously registered in the fall and spring semesters throughout their degree programs. Graduate degree candidates must be either enrolled for at least one credit or must register for Continuous Registration (CR) during the term that they complete their degree requirements. This policy applies from the time of first enrollment through the graduation term. Registration is also required during the summer term if University resources, such as the library or faculty consultation, are used. Students may fulfill this requirement by registering for any graduate credit-bearing course (regular or non-regular). As an alternative, students may opt for Continuous Registration (CR) status. If students opt to register for Continuous Registration (CR), a fee is assessed. Registration for CR status is accomplished in the same way as registration for courses. Section ID numbers appear in the class schedule under the CR prefix. (Graduate and Professional Bulletin). Continuous registration is not required during summer terms.

### **Instances in which continuous registration may be applicable to students in the MSW program:**

- Students who do not complete all coursework and/or receive a grade of “incomplete” for one or more courses at the end of their intended semester of graduation must enroll for CR during the term in which they will complete the required coursework and graduate. This requirement only applies if the student is not enrolled in any credit-bearing coursework during the actual graduation term.
- Students completing a Master’s thesis who have registered for six credits of SOWK 699 but require additional time must register for CR to remain active students until they complete their thesis and graduate. Satisfactory progress toward completion of the thesis must be demonstrated each term prior to approval for CR registration.



- Students with extenuating circumstances that prevent regular degree progression may be allowed to enroll in CR for up to two semesters without needing to apply for readmission. In such cases, CR enrollment must be approved by the student's advisor/committee chair, the Graduate Committee, and the Director of the MSW program.

Enrollment in CR beyond the allowed two semesters may be deemed as failure to make satisfactory degree progress. When a student's graduate advisor or advisory committee finds that a student is making unsatisfactory progress toward degree completion and satisfactory progress cannot be anticipated, the student and committee must create a progress plan and determine an appropriate timeline. If adequate progress is not made at the end of the timeline, the committee may recommend dismissal from the program and Colorado State University.

### **Program Withdrawal or Non-Continuous Registration**

There are several ways that social work graduate students may exit the MSW program prior to successful completion of the curriculum and graduation: a graduate student may voluntarily withdraw from the MSW program; may be dismissed from the program for scholastic or non-scholastic reasons; or may fail to continuously register in the MSW program (see above). The School of Social Work will not consider re-admission applications from students dismissed from the program for scholastic or non-scholastic reasons. A student who voluntarily withdrew from the program or failed to continuously register, may re-enroll in the MSW program by formally reapplying to the School of Social Work and to the Graduate School. The student application will be reviewed by the admissions committee following the normal admissions process. Readmission is not guaranteed.

### **Requesting an Incomplete in Field Education**

An incomplete can be requested if the student is currently in good standing on the course as demonstrated by a grade of C or higher and/or if more time is needed to complete 588 or 688 field education hours. To request an incomplete, the student should request the appropriate form from their academic advisor and communicate with each faculty/staff member to collaboratively determine the conditions of the incomplete. The student and faculty/staff signed incomplete form must then be approved by the MSW program director and filed with the Office Manager. Granting an incomplete is at the discretion of the MSW Program Director and the instructor for which the incomplete is being requested.

Please note, the MSW curriculum is a carefully designed program of study. Students may not complete advanced courses prior to completion of the foundation content. To be eligible to progress to the advanced generalist curriculum, students must successfully complete all generalist courses with a grade of C or better; must have earned an overall graduate GPA of 3.0 or higher; must successfully complete foundation field placement as determined by the student's field instructor, faculty consultant, and the Director of Field Education.

## School of Social Work Academic and Professional Standards

Students must demonstrate consistent, satisfactory progress toward completion of their degrees across all semesters of academic coursework and fieldwork to graduate from the program. The following describes expectations and responsibilities of students that directly pertain to successful completion of their degrees in addition to related policies and procedures. All MSW program expectations align with our professional (NASW) and University expectations.

### Scholastic Performance Standards

Pursuant to the Graduate School, MSW students must earn a C or better in all degree-required coursework and maintain a cumulative 3.0 grade point average (GPA). For courses graded with satisfactory/unsatisfactory, students must earn an S. Specifically:

- No course with a grade below a “C” will be credited toward the graduate degree.
- Students are not eligible to enter their final field placement unless they have a 3.0 GPA and will not be conferred a degree unless all course work is completed with a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.
- A grade of Unsatisfactory (“U”) in a required course is grounds for review by the MSW Program Director and possible recommendation for dismissal from the School of Social Work.

Failure to maintain good academic standing results in being placed on “academic warning” with the Graduate School. The warning period extends for one semester beyond the one in which this status is acquired. During this time, the student must register for traditionally graded courses that affect the grade point average. Students on academic warning are subject to dismissal by the Graduate School at the end of the semester unless good academic standing has been regained. This requires a cumulative grade point averages of 3.00. Please see the Graduate and Professional Bulletin for additional details on Graduate School requirements and procedures for maintaining good academic standing.

### Uphold Academic Integrity

Students are expected to uphold academic integrity as outlined by the University. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and falsification. Procedures for addressing academic misconduct are detailed in the [Student Conduct Code](#).

### Ethical Standards

To demonstrate satisfactory progress toward completion of their degrees, students are expected to maintain good standing with the School of Social Work and the University and uphold high ethical standards throughout their educational program, including all academic and agency settings encountered as students.

The [NASW Code of Ethics](#) is the cornerstone of determining and guiding ethical behavior for social workers and students, and adherence to these ethical standards is a requirement for the program. School of Social Work personnel are held to these same standards. Evidence of a breach in research ethics or in the NASW Code of Ethics may prompt a recommendation for immediate dismissal from the program. Students are directed to review the NASW Code of Ethics and the web page of the Office of the Vice President of Research that addresses Research and Scholarly Ethics. Inability, unwillingness, or failure to meet generally accepted professional guidelines of conduct, integrity, or emotional stability may result in the initiation accountability procedures, in alignment with the [policies of the Graduate](#)

[School](#) (see Evaluation of Graduate Students). The following lists provide an overview of circumstances that might warrant a degree progression review.

### **Acceptance of Responsibility**

- Concerns related to upholding basic principles of social work practice, including abiding by the NASW Code of Ethics, maintaining confidentiality, and showing respect for clients and colleagues.
- Difficulty or inability to secure a field internship within a reasonable period of time and/or termination from a field internship related to student performance.
- A lack of action to address or remedy personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, suicidality, or mental health impairment that interfere in the field placement or the classroom learning environments.
- Impaired performance in the classroom or in field.
- Unethical or criminal conduct that interferes with competent performance as a social work practitioner or may potentially compromise the safety of others or client services.
- Private conduct that interferes with the ability to fulfill student responsibilities or that represents dishonesty, fraud, deception, or misrepresentation.

### **Commitment to Learning**

- Lack of attendance in alignment with the MSW program or a field placement agency. Inability to consistently be where you have committed to be. Failure to report on time. Consistent lateness in meeting work deadlines.
- Behavior in the classroom or field activities, which causes a disruption in the learning of other students or in the service of clients.
- Lying, cheating, or any form of plagiarizing in coursework or fieldwork (see Graduate and Professional Bulletin)

### **Communication Style: Written, Verbal and Non-verbal**

- Inadequate written or verbal communication skills impede the ability to work effectively with faculty, peers, clients, and supervisors.
- Use of disrespectful or derogatory language in written or verbal communication with or about fellow students, colleagues, supervisors, or Educators.
- Inappropriate use of social networking

### **Interactions with Others**

- Lacking relationship skills necessary for social work practice, including the inability to form positive working relationships with clients, faculty, supervisors, and peers.
- Unwillingness or failure to respect human and cultural diversity.
- Entering a dual relationship with clients or failing to disclose a conflict of interest. Entering a sexual relationship or sexual activity with clients, whether consensual or forced.
- Acts or threats of physical violence or verbally abusive behavior toward fellow students, colleagues, supervisors, or Educators;

### **Participation in the Supervisory Process**

- The inability to accept constructive feedback and effectively utilize supervision from field instructors and/or faculty, and/or an inability to make changes recommended by this feedback.

- Failure to adhere to agency policies and professional standards of the agency during the field placement.

#### **Time Management and Organization**

- Persistent inability to meet deadline dates on assignments and projects, suggesting an inability to be dependable and responsible in serving clients.

#### **Professional Performance: Student Development and Accountability Procedures**

Every student in social work is a representative not only of the School of Social Work, but also of their chosen profession of social work. For this reason, faculty hold students accountable to professional performance standards in context of all settings and social interactions of relevance to their education and development as a professional social worker.

The School's approach to addressing professional performance concerns is determined by the nature of the concern, which falls into two categories:

**Low Level Concerns** include, but are not limited to, violations of scholastic or professional performance standards explained above, in which there is:

- No evidence of harm or risk of harm to self or others, agency or university
- A specific identifiable problem area
- Demonstrated student awareness, initiative, and ability to resolve the issue
- Evidence that the impact is limited to the student directly involved in the issue

**High Level Concerns** include, but are not limited to, violations of scholastic or professional performance standards explained above, in which there is/are:

- Evidence of harm or risk of harm to self, others, agency or university
- Diffuse concerns which affect multiple aspects of the learning environment
- Concern regarding how the student's behavior negatively impacts the learning environments for others
- Concern because the student is already on remediation status for a low-level concern and he/she failed to successfully remediate in the Improvement Plan

#### **Identifying Concerns**

The School of Social Work encourages faculty to informally assess the ethical conduct of every student in their classes and directly address any emerging concerns with students in a timely fashion.

During each semester (typically after the semester's mid-point), instructors are asked to identify any student who is struggling with acceptance of responsibility, commitment to learning, communication style, interactions with others, participation in the supervisory process, or time management and organization. If concerns are identified, they are responded to as either low level or high level concerns in coordination with the MSW Advisor, the MSW Program Director, and the School Director.

#### **Addressing Low Level Concerns**

Low level concerns identified by faculty will first be addressed informally. Concerns related to ethical or value-aligned conduct are often identified early in the student's program and are most effectively addressed by instructors as soon as they arise. If concerns related to behavior arise during a course,

instructors are responsible for addressing them directly with the student in a confidential and timely manner.

If low level concerns persist after faculty has addressed them with the student, the MSW Program Director is notified. The MSW Program Director or advising designee is then responsible for directly talking with a student about the concern and helping that student understand and develop strategies to help address identified concerns. The MSW Program Director may consult with faculty who identified concerns and meet with the faculty and student in a collaborative discussion aimed at problem solving and goal setting.

### **Addressing High Level Concerns**

High level concerns will be addressed in alignment with the policies provided by the Graduate School. This includes:

1. Schedule a meeting with the student, advisor, and the department head that provides reasonable notice of the issues to be covered. If the student is a graduate assistant (GA), the supervisor is to be included in the meeting as well. The student has the right to include an advocate or mentor in the meeting.
2. During the meeting, inform the student of the concerns, create a progress plan with the student, and develop a timeline and inform the student of the potential consequences (e.g., recommendation for dismissal) if progress is not satisfactory. If the student has a disability, inform the student of their right to request reasonable accommodation from the Student Disability Center or OEO (if the student is a GA).
3. A written summary of the meeting will be shared with all parties and copied to the Dean of the Graduate School so that the Dean is informed. A copy of the summary shall be maintained in a departmental file.
4. The committee should keep in contact with the students to provide support and give feedback during the progress plan timeline and document such contacts and their outcomes.
5. At the end of the timeline, if progress is not adequate, the committee may recommend dismissal from the program and/or termination of an assistantship if applicable (See Termination of Graduate Assistants). The recommendation must include documentation of the steps taken with justification for the action. The recommendation is forwarded to the Department Head for approval and the Dean of the Graduate School for final action.

### **Dismissal from the Program**

The School of Social Work Director may make a recommendation to the Graduate School that the student is dismissed from the program under three conditions:

- A high-level concern has been identified that is serious enough to warrant a recommendation for immediate dismissal from the program.
- The student fails to adequately address concerns about ethical or value-aligned conduct within one semester after being placed on departmental probation.
- Progress related to concerns about ethical or value-aligned conduct is not sustained after the student has been removed from Departmental Probation and/or new serious, credible, and documented issues pertaining to ethical or value-aligned conduct have arisen.

The Graduate School makes all final determinations regarding dismissal of an MSW student from the program. The Graduate School may dismiss a student from the program for reasons of unsatisfactory progress toward completion of his or her degree based on these considerations:

- The student does not have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher following one semester on academic probation;
- The student has not passed field education;
- There is credible documented evidence that the student has engaged in academic misconduct;
- There is credible documented evidence of serious violations of the university's ethical principles and/or NASWs Code of Ethics; OR
- There is credible documented evidence of serious problems with ethical or value-aligned conduct that have not been resolved despite documented interventions by CSU- School of Social Work faculty and/or fieldwork educator(s).

#### **Grievance Procedure for the School of Social Work**

The MSW Program aligns with the policies of the Graduate School and is committed to maintaining a learning community that includes mutual accountability to the professional and ethical standards that we all share. Please refer to the following policies detailed in the Graduate Bulletin for grade appeals, informal and formal complaints, and appeals. Please consider meeting with your advisor, the MSW Program Director, or another member of our personnel with whom you feel trust to be supported throughout this process. Additional resources, such as the Student Resolution Center, are also available to be of support.

- [Grade Appeals](#)
- [Informal and Formal Complaints](#)
- [Graduate School Appeals](#)

## Student Involvement in School Governance

The School of Social Work and the MSW Program values collaborative program administration through formal and informal opportunities that support student leadership, representation on School governance committees, and organizing around student interests. Each cohort is invited to uniquely shape their engagement in these opportunities. All students in the School of Social Work are encouraged to participate in the Student Association of Social Workers (SASW). For contact information for current student and faculty representatives, please contact your MSW Advisor.

MSW students are also encouraged to participate as active members of ad hoc committees as needed (i.e. faculty search committee). Representation on school committees provides an excellent opportunity for students to impact educational policy and stay informed about program administration. Students who serve as representatives to these committees are asked to disseminate the information to their fellow students.

For a current list of student organizations, committees, and other engagement opportunities please visit the [Student Involvement website](#).

## Program Policies

Students should reference the [Graduate and Professional Bulletin](#) to review University policies and procedures that support the administration of the MSW program. These include but are not limited to Non-discrimination, sexual harassment, and Title IX. Program specific policies and frequently asked policies are provided in summary below:

### Attendance Policy

Our attendance policy is an extension of our learning community, which is co-constructed by students and personnel. **Therefore, the School of Social Work requests that all students and personnel communicate about any necessary absences. Advanced notice is appreciated when possible.**

We *highly* recommend that you make every effort to attend every class. Attendance requires not only being present during class sessions but also demonstrating your readiness to learn and being accountable for the outcomes of your own learning (e.g., completing asynchronous class activities). A single missed session can potentially create gaps in your learning and skill development. However, we do understand that an absence may be necessary at times.

Our attendance policy is:

- You are expected to communicate prior to an absence at the earliest opportunity, if/when possible, with your instructor if you will be late to or absent from any class sessions.
- Instructors are not responsible for providing supplemental learning opportunities related to classes missed. It is your responsibility to review content missed and complete all work in the course. Handouts and/or lecture notes may be obtained from other students in attendance.
- On-campus students must attend a minimum of 70% of the course in order to receive a passing grade. Under extenuating circumstances, an exception to the above policy may be granted. In

such circumstances, a plan needs to be developed with your instructor to ensure that engagement takes place to demonstrate your understanding of class learning objectives and class content. Please note that additional accommodations may be made for students with documented disabilities as recommended by the [Student Disability Center](#).

- We recognize that the distance program requires an attendance policy that is tailored to this method of learning. Therefore, distance students with hybrid attendance requirements must receive prior approval from the instructor for planned absences. If an unplanned absence is necessary due to illness, emergency, etc., please notify your instructor as soon as possible. For any absence, you will need to submit a proposal to the instructor of how you intend to demonstrate your competence of the course content that was missed. This may be accomplished by providing a written reflection of your understanding of class learning objectives and class content; submitting a paper or other assignment that demonstrates your understanding of class lectures, discussion, and readings; and/or completing class handouts.
- **For all MSW program options, absences can result in a reduction of the course grade as outlined in each course syllabus.**

### **Children on Campus**

The School of Social Work limits children attending classes with parents/caretakers for the protection and well-being of minors. If a circumstance occurs that necessitates a child being present in class, this must be coordinated with and approved by the class Instructor prior to class. Please see CSU's policy on Protection of Minors for further information visit: [CSU Policy: Protection of Minors](#).

### **Dogs on Campus**

The School of Social Work upholds [CSU Policy: Service Dogs and Emotional Support Animals](#). As such, only certified service dogs supporting a student regarding a specific disability are permitted in classrooms. Documentation regarding service dog certification and/or confirmation from campus entities regarding the service animal should be provided to course instructors. Please note: Emotional support animals are not permitted in campus buildings.

### **Student Records**

The School of Social Work upholds CSU's policy regarding the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Please reference the [FERPA policy](#) for information on accessing or requesting student records.

### **Financial Information**

Students are encouraged to meet with a representative from the [Office of Financial Aid](#) to fiscally plan for graduate school.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition is assessed at the graduate rates for CSU, which are set per academic year and available online at [Office of Financial Aid - Tuition and Fees page](#).

In addition to base tuition, the School utilizes differential tuition to support program costs. Differential tuition is currently \$115 per credit.



## Scholarships

There are several scholarships that are offered through the College of Health and Human Sciences. The number and amount of awards varies yearly. For the most up-to-date information on available opportunities, please visit the [College's scholarship website](#). **Most scholarship applications are due on March 1<sup>st</sup> every year.**

## Grants and Loans

CSU offers a variety of financial assistance programs (grants and loans) for students. Awards recognize scholastic achievement and encourage educational growth through financial support of students with financial need. CSU also participates in several Federal Loan Programs. Detailed information on all financial aid programs is available upon request from Student Financial Services and on the [Student Financial Services website](#).

# Student Support and Wellness Resources

## Faculty

Students may see faculty during regularly scheduled office hours that are identified in course syllabi. Outside of these hours, students may request appointments in advance to meet with faculty.

## CSU Health Network Counseling Services

[CSU's Health Network - Mental and Emotional Health page](#)

We all experience problems in our lives. Sometimes those are situational and quickly resolved. Sometimes they can be more serious and difficult to handle. [Counseling Services](#) helps students with a wide range of mental health concerns. If you or someone you know is stressed by life circumstances, experiencing mental health symptoms, or have any thoughts of suicide, please talk to a caring professional.

- Visit [CSU Health Network Counseling Services](#): 3rd floor of CSU Health & Medical Center, 151 W. Lake St.
  - Whether you're experiencing a situational problem, an immediate crisis, or have a longstanding mental health concern, we're here to help. Counseling Services provides a wide range of services to meet the needs of fee-paying students on the Fort Collins campus. [Learn more about Counseling Services.](#)

Call the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): (800) 273-TALK (8255). This is a 24-hour, toll-free, confidential suicide prevention hotline available to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

## CSU Resources

Colorado State University offers a wealth of resources and services that can assist social work students academically, financially, and socially as they meet the challenges of graduate school along with those presented in their personal lives. We strongly encourage students to take advantage of the resources and advocacy groups on campus that may help facilitate a positive learning and growth experience while at Colorado State.

- [Academic Advancement Center](#)
- [Associated Students of CSU \(ASCSU\)](#)

- [Campus Writing Center](#)
- [Career Center](#)
- [Collaborative for Student Achievement](#)
- [Counseling Services](#)
- [CoViD-19 Recovery](#)
- [Graduate Center for Diversity and Access](#)
- [CSU Health Network](#)
- [International Programs](#)
- [Maps, Campus](#)
- [CSU Libraries](#)
- [Off-Campus Life](#)
- [Office of Financial Aid](#)
- [Student Leadership, Involvement and Community Engagement](#)
- [Student Organizations](#)

### **Student Diversity Programs and Advocacy Resources at CSU**

- [Asian/Pacific American Cultural Center](#)
- [Black/African American Cultural Center](#)
- [El Centro](#)
- [Pride Resource Center](#)
- [Native American Cultural Center](#)
- [Student Disability Center](#)
- [Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science](#)
- [Women and Gender Advocacy](#)

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

#### **NASW Membership**

NASW is a professional association for social workers that establishes standards for practice, monitors practice trends, drafts legislation, lobbies the legislature, and disseminates information on state regulations, personnel practices, salaries, and jobs. Membership in NASW also allows social workers to join the Academy of Certified Social Workers, a certification program.

Student membership is open to any student currently enrolled in a CSWE-accredited program. CSU social work students are encouraged to join the professional organization, the National Association of Social Workers. The NASW National Office may be reached at 1-800-638-8799. The Colorado Chapter of NASW may be reached toll free at 1-888-595-6279. Student rates are \$60.00 per year and include the following benefits:

- A subscription to ***Social Work: The Journal of the NASW***;
- A subscription to NASW News – reporting on issues of interest from NASW, state chapter of NASW, and on national and state political concern;
- Eligibility to purchase professional liability, health, life, and other types of insurance for Social Workers;
- Conferences at the state, regional, and national levels;

- Opportunities for participation on committees designed to further the goals of the social work professional; and
- State newsletters notifying members of local news and workshops of interest to Social Workers.

NASW, Colorado Chapter

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## Appendix

### Appendix A: Admissions Policies and Procedures

The Graduate School and MSW program application process is combined and is entirely online. Access is available during each cohort's application window.

#### Criteria for admission

Within the framework of the policies established by the University and the Graduate School, the School of Social Work will have the responsibility and authority for the recruitment, screening, selection, and admission of its students.

The School will admit those applicants with the greatest potential for completing the master's level course of study and becoming effective social work practitioners. In its review of applications, the School seeks evidence of an applicant's capacity to think critically, do graduate-level work, reason logically, and think creatively. A successful applicant is expected to reflect alignment with basic social work values, that are respectful of the dignity of all human beings, and that indicate a sense of social responsibility. Applicants must be able to meet the emotional requirements of the program and possess a capacity to develop positive interpersonal relationships.

The School is committed to drawing the student body from applicants with a demonstrated concern for social issues and the desire to work for the enhancement of life for all people, especially those groups devalued by society. A successful applicant must evidence a strong determination to acquire the competencies needed for effective advanced generalist practice within the context of community and possess a willingness to develop the abilities needed for contributing to practice and policy development and the knowledge base of the profession.

#### Criteria for rating applicants

- Demonstrated ability to enter into positive helping relationships
- Life and practice experience, including volunteer and field experiences with varied client systems and devalued people from diverse populations
- Commitment to social work/human services from an advanced generalist perspective
- Quality of recommendations by references
- Academic potential based on writing and organizational skills, and ability to think critically. Though our department does not rank applicants based on grade point average the Graduate School, which makes the ultimate yes/no admission decision, uses undergraduate GPA as a rating metric.

#### Regular MSW and dual degree MSW/MPH program admission requirements

- A four-year undergraduate degree from an accredited college or university.
- 3.0 GPA (4.0 scale). Exceptions may be made for applicants in the 2.8-2.99 range. There are a few strategies to bolster an application when the undergraduate GPA is below 3.0. Contact the graduate program coordinator for details.
- Minimum of 18 standard credits of interdisciplinary liberal arts coursework, spanning social, behavioral, and biological sciences.

- Applicants must have completed at least one course in physical or biological sciences or mathematics (examples: biology, calculus, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, physics, or statistics).
- Applicants must have completed at least three courses in social sciences (examples: anthropology, economics, education, ethnic studies, gender studies, human development, international relations, political science, psychology, social work, or sociology).
- Applicants must have completed at least two general liberal arts courses.
- An applicant must present a plan for completing any missing prerequisites in the above criteria before being considered for admission.
  - These courses may be taken at any accredited college, university, or community college; or by telecourse, by correspondence, by independent study, by CLEP (College-Level Examination Program), or online.
  - These courses must be successfully completed prior to the beginning of classes in order for you to begin the program.
- Applications that are incorrect, incomplete, &/or have items missing at the deadline may not be included for admissions consideration.

#### **International Applicants**

- Applications from international students are accepted provided they meet all admission requirements plus those regulations established by the university for foreign students.
- English proficiency requirements:
  - TOEFL – minimum score of 550 (paper test), 213 (computer-based test) or 80 (Internet)
  - IELTS – minimum score of 6.5
  - CSU’s [INTO](#) program offers comprehensive support services along with help with Academic English.
- The requirements also include proof of financial backing for the duration of the program.

#### **Advanced Standing MSW and dual degree MSW/MPH program admission requirements**

The advanced standing program is for applicants who have graduated from an accredited undergraduate social work program within the past seven years. Advanced students begin our program by supplementing their BSW education with three courses, then go directly into advanced generalist coursework.

The following are the minimum requirements for admission to the advanced standing program:

- Four-year undergraduate degree in social work earned within seven years from the start date of the MSW cohort being applied for from an accredited BSW program.
- 3.0 overall undergraduate grade point average (4.0 scale). Exceptions may be made for applicants in the 2.8-2.99 range. There are a few strategies to bolster an application when the undergraduate GPA is below 3.0. Contact the graduate program coordinator for details.
- 3.0 grade point average in undergraduate social work courses.

#### **Application procedures**

Required information will include:

Statement of Purpose

- The essay questions are an important component of your overall application. Please be sure to respond to each question fully, using a maximum of 3 pages per question. Questions are updated regularly and can be found on [the program admission website](#).

#### Summary of Experience

- Upload a detailed resume-style document describing the types of experiences you have had that relate to your goal of professional social work practice. The Admissions Committee is looking for detail, not brevity.
- List all experiences chronologically (starting with the most recent and working backward).
- Include the following information for each relevant entry:
  1. Name of agency or organization
  2. Type of agency (social work; human service, i.e., nursing, teaching, psychiatric, etc.; public or private industry in human resource area, i.e., training, personnel, community work, board or committee, etc.)
  3. Position held
  4. Paid or volunteer
  5. Length of time in positions and average amount of time worked each week, computed in hours. Please be very specific about the total hours spent on each position. Compute your total direct human service hours for each position and include them in each position's listing.
  6. Nature of activities performed (direct service delivery, i.e., counseling, tutoring; indirect service, i.e., supervising, administrative, lobbying, board membership)
  7. Population groups served (children, seniors, adolescents, ethnic minorities, women, men)
  8. Frequency of supervisory contact and supervisor's qualifications
- This document must include a computation of hours worked in each social service setting totaled for each relevant position.

#### Three references (minimum) -

- One reference must be a person who has most recently supervised the applicant in a human service delivery experience (paid, volunteer, or educational).
- Appropriate sources for references include employers, field instructors, supervisors, and university faculty.
- You will enter the references' contact information into the application form and the Graduate School will contact the references directly with instructions.

#### Official transcripts -

- You must arrange for an official transcript from each institution you attended after high school to be sent directly to CSU.
- Transcripts must be sent directly from those institutions to CSU to be official. If they are received from you they are not official and will not be accepted.

In addition to the above, MSW/MPH dual degree applicants must also upload an essay:

- 3-point Essay on MSW/MPH interest
  - Please respond to the three points below in your essay. (5,000 character maximum)
  - Tell us why you are applying to the combined MSW/MPH Program (what you hope to gain through this program versus the traditional MSW Program:

1. how you anticipate using your training for the MPH program in career paths you are considering;
2. how your career as a social worker with an MPH might contribute to our profession;
3. what you know about the importance of public health training to the role of social workers in society.

Detailed instructions are also available as part of the graduate admissions application process once you create your login.

Colorado State University encourages full and open expression by students; please know we will respond to any reported disclosures related to sexual misconduct and interpersonal violence. If your submission contains information related to past or present sexual misconduct or interpersonal violence, you may receive an outreach from CSU's Office of Title IX Programs to discuss reporting options and available support resources. For more information, please visit [The Office of Title IX Programs and Gender Equity website](#).

**Applications that are incorrect, incomplete, &/or have items missing at the deadline may not be included for admissions consideration. The application fee covers processing for all applications regardless of admissions outcome. The fee cannot be waived and is nonrefundable.**

#### **Appendix B. Transfer Policy for Students Requesting to Transfer into CSU's MSW Program from a Different Institution's MSW Program**

The MSW Program at CSU does not accept transfer applications. If you have completed MSW coursework at another accredited program, you are invited to apply to our MSW Program. Upon admission, please contact the Graduate Program Coordinator, to initiate a credit equivalency review and provide a copy of each course syllabus that you are requesting to count toward your program of study. A maximum of 9 credits taken externally to CSU will be counted towards the MSW degree. Final determinations about credit equivalency are completed through [the Graduate School and the GS-6 Program of Study Resources](#).

## Appendix C. Financial Considerations

### On Campus Tuition

Graduate Tuition per credit (with fees): \$874.48 \*

Cost for 3 credit course on campus (with differential tuition, \$115/credit): \$2,967

### Online Tuition

Graduate Tuition per credit (no fees assessed): \$725 \*\*

Cost for 3 credit course online (no differential tuition assessed): \$2,175.00

### **Full time student cost breakdown**

Cost for 15 credits all on campus (with differential tuition): \$8,659

Cost for 15 credits with one online elective (with differential tuition): \$10,418

### **Full time student cost breakdown (online)**

Cost for 15 credits online (no differential tuition assessed): \$10,875

### **Part time student cost breakdown**

Cost for 9 credits on campus (with differential tuition): \$7,827

### **Part time student cost breakdown (online)**

Cost for 9 credits online (no differential tuition assessed): \$6,525

\* On campus rate based on Fall 2024 tuition and is subject to change.

\*\* Online tuition rate based on CSU Online tuition for Fall 2024.