MSW Program Handbook

Revised August 2025

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.

The Graduate School Handbook provides specific information related to your responsibilities as a graduate student. The Graduate School also provides essential information on steps once you are admitted, important dates and deadlines required to complete your degree, and policies and procedures.

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.

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 and 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 eight academic units in the College of Health and Human Sciences that make practical applications 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 MSW Program prepares graduates for advanced generalist social work practice, advocacy, research, and leadership. The MSW program strives to center anti-oppressive and collaborative practice.

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 MSW Program prepares graduates for theoretically grounded advanced generalist social work practice, advocacy, research, and leadership. The MSW program strives to center anti-oppressive and collaborative practice. Our program equips students for versatile career paths such as clinical practice with individuals, partners, families, and/or groups; school-based work; leadership; and policy advocacy.

MSW Degree Requirements
Requirements for the MSW degree include the completion of 62 credits for two-year MSW students and 39 credits for Advanced Standing students. A Bachelor's Degree in Social Work from a CSWE-accredited program earned within the last seven years is required for the Advanced Standing programs. All 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.*** All Graduate School requirements must be fulfilled for program and/or graduate certificate completion.

Program Options

The MSW Program is available as a full-time through the on-campus option or part time through the hybrid distance program as follows:

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

The MSW Program also offers an on-campus dual degree option with the Master's in Public Health degree and a joint degree option with a Master's in Addiction Counseling in Psychology. More details on these program options are included in the sections below.

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 2022 Educational Policies and Standards (EPAS) published by the Council on Social Work Education.

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

Full-time On-Campus Curriculum

2-Year Program

Year 1	Credits	Semester
SOWK 500 Foundations in Social Work	3	Fall
SOWK 511 Practice Skills with Individuals and Groups	3	Fall
SOWK 530 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice	3	Fall
SOWK 600 Social Work Research Methods	3	Fall
Elective*	3	Fall
SOWK 513 Clinical Assessment Skills	3	Spring
SOWK 520 Social Welfare - Policy, Issues, and Advocacy	3	Spring
SOWK 588 Foundation Practice Based Learning	6	Spring
Elective*	3	Spring

Year 2	Credits	Semester
SOWK 605 Program Evaluation in Social Work	3	Fall
SOWK 630 Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	3	Fall
SOWK 631 Mezzo and Macro Social Work I	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	7	Fall
Elective* (optional)	3	Fall
SOWK 633 Mezzo and Macro Social Work II	3	Spring
SOWK 634 Advanced Practice with Families and Groups	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	7	Spring
Elective*	3	Spring

* Two year MSW students are required to complete 9 elective credits. Advanced Standing MSW students are required to complete 3 elective credits. Dual degree (MSW/MPH) electives are fulfilled by MPH coursework and joint degree (MSW/MACP) are fulfilled by Psychology coursework unless otherwise noted by your Advisor. 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.

Note: 45 Practice-Based Learning Hours= 1 credit hour. Foundation year placement must be 270 Practice-Based Learning hours (6 credits). Concentration year placement must be 630 Practice-Based Learning hours (14 credits).

Advanced Standing Program

Year 1	Credits	Semester
SOWK 516 Assessment in Social Work	2	Summer
SOWK 531 Anti-Oppressive Principles and Pedagogy	3	Summer
SOWK 604 Applied Social Work Research	2	Summer
Elective* (optional)	3	Summer
SOWK 605 Program Evaluation in Social Work	3	Fall
SOWK 630 Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	3	Fall
SOWK 631 Mezzo and Macro Social Work I	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	7	Fall
Elective* (optional)	3	Fall
SOWK 633 Mezzo and Macro Social Work II	3	Spring
SOWK 634 Advanced Practice with Families and Groups	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	7	Spring
Elective*	3	Spring

* Two year MSW students are required to complete 9 elective credits. Dual degree (MSW/MPH) electives are fulfilled by MPH coursework and joint degree (MSW/MACP) are fulfilled by Psychology coursework unless otherwise noted by your Adviser. 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.

Note: 45 Practice-Based Learning Hours= 1 credit hour. Foundation year placement must be 270 Practice-Based Learning hours (6 credits). Concentration year placement must be 6730 Practice-Based Learning hours (14 credits).

Part-Time Distance Hybrid Program – Full Program (3 year)

Year 1	Credits	Semester
SOWK 511 Practice Skills with Individuals and Groups	3	Spring
SOWK 530 Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice	3	Spring
SOWK 500 Foundations in Social Work	3	Summer
SOWK 600 Social Work Research Methods	3	Summer
SOWK 520 Social Welfare - Policy, Issues, and Advocacy	3	Fall
SOWK 588 Foundation Practice Based Learning	3	Fall

Year 2	Credits	Semester
SOWK 513 Clinical Assessment Skills	3	Spring
SOWK 588 Foundation Practice Based Learning	3	Spring
Elective* (optional)	3	Spring
SOWK 605 Program Evaluation in Social Work	3	Summer
SOWK 630 Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	3	Summer
Elective* (optional)	3	Spring
SOWK 631 Mezzo and Macro Social Work I	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Fall
Elective*	3	Fall

Year 3	Credits	Semester
SOWK 633 Mezzo and Macro Social Work II	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Spring
Elective*	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Summer
Elective* (recommended)	3	Spring
SOWK 634 Advanced Practice with Families and Groups	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Fall

* Full program (3 year in distance hybrid program) MSW students are required to complete 9 elective credits. 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.

Note: 45 Practice-Based Learning Hours= 1 credit hour. Foundation year placement must be 270 Practice-Based Learning hours (6 credits). Concentration year placement must be 6730 Practice-Based Learning hours (14 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.**

Part-Time Distance Hybrid Program Advanced Standing (2 year)

Year 1	Credits	Semester
SOWK 516 Assessment in Social Work	3	Spring
SOWK 531 Anti-Oppressive Principles and Pedagogy	3	Spring
SOWK 604 Applied Social Work Research	3	Spring
SOWK 605 Program Evaluation in Social Work	3	Summer
SOWK 630 Advanced Generalist Practice with Individuals	3	Summer
Elective* (optional)	3	Spring
SOWK 631 Mezzo and Macro Social Work I	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Fall
Elective* (optional)	3	Fall

Year 2	Credits	Semester
SOWK 633 Mezzo and Macro Social Work II	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Spring
Elective* (optional)	3	Spring
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Summer
Elective* (recommended)	3	Spring
SOWK 634 Advanced Practice with Families and Groups	3	Fall
SOWK 688 Advanced Generalist Practice-Based Learning	3	Fall

* Advanced Standing MSW students are required to complete 3 elective credits. 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.

Note: 45 Practice-Based Learning Hours= 1 credit hour. Foundation year placement must be 270 Practice-Based Learning hours (6 credits). Concentration year placement must be 6730 Practice-Based Learning hours (14 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 with the on-campus program option for full-time students.

Joint Degree Program: MSW/MACP

The Colorado State University MSW/MACP provides a unique learning opportunity to blend the ethics and values of social work with addictions counseling in psychology. There is an ever-growing need for licensed addictions counselors to advance the health and well-being of our communities; social workers contribute social justice-oriented systemic approaches on micro, mezzo, and macro levels and addiction counselors have specific skills to support clients struggling with substance and behavioral addictions. The blended discipline draws on both social work and addiction counseling research, practice, and theoretical frameworks. Combined, the two fields of social work and addictions counseling:

- Allow for a Fast-Track Towards Clinical Licensure: Students are on an expedited programmatic progression that sets them up to be immediately eligible for licensure as a licensed addictions counselor (LAC) upon graduation

- Are ADEI-Focused: The Joint Degree Program is centered anti-oppressive/anti-discriminatory interventions that highlight diversity, equity, and inclusion of all in accessing wholistic, individualized treatment approaches.
- Fill a Growing Need the in Human Service Field: Students are cross-educated between both disciplines of social work and addictions counseling in psychology to have a robust, dual skillset in engaging in harm-reduction-focused work, prevention, and active addition work with client.
- Set Students up to be Successful and Marketable: Students are top candidates in the job market to work in the field as a Licensed Addictions Counselor (LAC) with the option to become dually licensed as they can work towards becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).
- Value Interdisciplinary Work: The Joint Degree Program support working with multiple systems, organizations, and professions to reach individuals, groups, communities, and populations on micro, mezzo, and macro levels of care.
- Promote Person-Centered Approaches: The Joint Degree Program is rooted in person-first treatment options, lowering barriers to accessible care, and respecting the worth and dignity of all clients working towards change and recovery.

Both social workers and addictions counselors share a focus in providing anti-oppressive care, working towards sustainable change with clients, and promoting the health and wellbeing of all communities. For more information about the dual degree program, please visit the MSW/MACP Program Website.

*Please note, this program is only available with the on-campus program option for both the Advanced Standing and Full-Time Cohorts.

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. All students can choose online electives offered within the School of Social Work. Students enrolled in the on-campus program option can also select from on-campus interdisciplinary courses from the approved course list.

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 instruction (RI) tuition benefits. For on-campus students, online courses are not included in RI tuition and/or may impact students differently depending on individual-specific situations, courseload, in-state or out of state status, etc. Therefore, it is strongly encouraged to review these cost considerations prior to starting the program and plan your electives accordingly. Contact the Financial Aid Office with questions about cost of online courses as it relates to your resident instruction status.** For further information, please review the financial impact info sheet in the appendices or reach out to Evan Lowe (he/him), CLOE Coordinator, at Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu.

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

SOWK 551: Fundamentals of Mediation (required course)	Every term
Students select two of the following courses:	
SOWK 552: Conflict Management: Health and Eldercare	Varied* (spring of odd years)
SOWK 553: Multiparty Conflict Resolution	Varied* (fall of even years)
SOWK 554: Conflict Resolution in the Workplace	Varied* (fall of odd years)
SOWK 556: Divorce and Family Mediation	Varied* (spring of even years)

*Contact CLOE Coordinator, Evan.Lowe@colostate.edu, for information on when these courses are offered.

Advanced Clinical Behavioral Health

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

PreK-12 School Social Work

SOWK 560: Social Work Practice in Schools (required course)	Every term
Students select two of the following courses:	
SOWK 551: Fundamentals of Mediation	Every term
SOWK 561: Exceptionalities in Education	Summer
SOWK 562: Functional Behavior Assessment	Summer

Nonprofit Administration

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

Social Aspects of Human-Animal Interactions

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 approved online list under the "Electives Options tab"**.** Additional courses at the 500 level or above **may** qualify as MSW electives if approved by the MSW Advisor. If interested in taking a course that's not listed on the approved list online, follow the Elective Approval Protocol process. Please refer to 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. There are two advisor roles within the MSW program, one dedicated to supporting on-campus students and one supporting distance hybrid students.

Academic and Professional Advising

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, joint degree, and part-time students; and advising is strongly encouraged for all other students. The advisor for the joint degree program is the Joint Degree Administrator.

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.

Graduation Requirements

Forms

Important note: for students on the above outlined program of study (Plan C), the below referenced committee formation form will not be needed.For students who are completing the program on the previous program of study (Plan B): During the semester in which the student is enrolled in SOWK 600, the MSW Advisor or Graduate Program Coordinator will send instructions for completing the committee formation form (GS-5). Each student must prepare this form (GS-5), which identifies and lists the members of the student's research committee. The committee formation form 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.

Program of Study Form: The Graduate School reviews each Program of Study, the GS-6 form, 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 the 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 completing the Plan B program of study students must submit a GS24 – Report of Final Examination Results Form – to their research committees during their defenses. If the committee approves of the poster session and related research presentation, they will sign the GS24, at which point this form must be completed and routed to the Graduate School office. Additionally, students on the Plan B program of study will also complete a GS40 Non-Thesis Plan B Master's Requirement Form.

Research Requirement

For students on the previous program of study (Plan B): 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.

For students on the above listed program of study (Plan C): this is a coursework only master's degree plan as outlined by the Graduate School. No thesis, project, or final examination is required for Plan C master's degrees.

Procedures for the Appointment of Plan B Graduate Committees

For students completing the program on the Plan B program of study: 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 Research Advisor 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
5. Review the Graduate School's Advisor and Committee Requirements for more information.

Practice-Based Learning

Practice-Based Learning, or Internship, is the signature pedagogy of MSW education. An overview of Practice-Based Learning for your MSW program is provided below – however, please review the MSW Practice-Based Learning Program Manual available online.

Consistent with the nature of professional social work practice, students in internships are evaluated on all of the program's competencies. Individualized learning situations in the internship, combined with Practice-Based Learning 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 internship following the core competencies and practice behaviors to meet the learning goals and objectives as students integrate their classroom learning and Practice-Based Learning 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 internships.

The Practice-Based Learning program at CSU utilizes Experiential Learning Cloud (formerly Tevera) software to support placement planning, all Practice-Based Learning-related documentation, student evaluations, and other communications. Students will receive information on purchasing their one-time Experiential Learning Cloud license (course material) for the duration of their time at CSU as they begin the internship process. Students who have previously purchased Experiential Learning Cloud for a different program or school do not need to purchase the software again.

Students are informed of criteria for evaluating their performance in their internships via the Practice-Based Learning 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 (for some agencies, but not all), problems in Practice-Based Learning, procedures for grievances, and evaluation of student performance are documented in the Practice-Based Learning materials. These criteria are reviewed in Internship Orientation and discussed in the Practice-Based Learning materials for students, Social Work Internship Supervisors (SWIS), On-Site Task Managers, and the affiliated agencies in the Practice-Based Learning program.

MSW Practice-Based Learning/Internship Requirements

Important policy and procedure information regarding Practice-Based Learning is detailed in the Practice-Based Learning Manual. **To be eligible for internship placements, 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 internships.

The purpose of Practice-Based Learning 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. Internships 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.

Practice-Based Learning 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 Practice-Based Learning 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 Internship Coordinators are held in the semester before students begin their internships. Using Experiential Learning Cloud, 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 internship.** A degree in social work cannot be obtained without completing the Practice-Based Learning component of the program.

A variety of factors may impact whether an internship site is a good fit. Information like work history, skills gained, and desired focus area are important to include on your resume and internship application. Other aspects of a student's history (e.g. legal history or immigration status) are also helpful to communicate with your Internship Coordinator in person. Disclosure of immigration status or legal history will not be shared with anyone outside of the Practice-Based Learning Team. We respect your privacy, and disclosing this information will help your Internship Coordinator best support you in securing an internship.

Placement agencies vary in the type of screening they require prior to placement. One or more of the following records or screenings may be required of students by the potential internship site:

- Immunization records and updates;
- Criminal arrest background check through Colorado Bureau of Investigation;
- Central Registry check for child abuse charges, Health and Human Services' List of Excluded Individuals;
- Drug and alcohol testing or other medical screening (e.g. TB 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.

The School of Social Work considers student safety a priority in the Internship. Required orientations occur at the start of each Internship where safety information and risk management are reviewed. Please see the Practice-Based Learning Manual for policies, procedures and criteria supporting student safety.

Generalist (Foundation) Internship (Full Program students, SOWK 588)
In the Foundation Internship, students are assigned to selected agencies 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, internal or external to the internship agency, (from an accredited MSW program) with at least two years of post-graduate experience. The Foundation Internship 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 internship during their degree program. At the beginning of the semester prior to the internship term, students must attend a scheduled Placement Meeting with their MSW Internship Coordinator. This meeting provides an overview of the internship application process, procedures, and information about the required Practice-Based Learning software (course materials purchased one time) required for all internship experiences. The placement process for students in partner agencies is an important part of the Practice-Based Learning program and marks the beginning of the internship experience.

Advanced Generalist Internship (All MSW Students, SOWK 688)
In the Concentration Internship, 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 Internship, students complete 630 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 internship during their degree program. At the beginning of the semester prior to the internship term, students must review internship application material provided by their MSW Internship Coordinator, which provides an overview of the internship application process, procedures, and as information about Experiential Learning Cloud (course materials purchased one time) required for all internship experiences. The placement process for students in partnering agencies is an important part of the Practice-Based Learning program and marks the beginning of the internship experience.

MSW/MPH Dual Degree Internships
Students enrolled in the dual degree program will be required to follow the Internship processes and invited to participate in an MPH orientation at the start of their program. After completing the MPH portion of the dual degree (unless alternative arrangement are made for completion of the dual degree), students will join the MSW program and engage in Practice-Based Learning program and processes. Dual degree students are required to fulfill additional public health requirements as part of the public health competencies and standards.

MSW/MACP Joint Degree Internships
Students enrolled in the Joint Deree Program will be required to complete the MSW Practice-Based Learning and MACP Internship processes which allows students to work directly with clients and agencies in the addictions field while also receiving internship and supervision hours from a Licensed Addictions Counselor (LAC) and a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), in order to be eligible for licensure upon graduation.

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.
- For students completing the program on the Plan B program of study: 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 following the normal admissions process. Readmission is not guaranteed.

Requesting an Incomplete in Coursework and/or Practice Based Learning

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 Practice-Based Learning hours. To request an incomplete, the student should meet with their advisor or internship coordinator to discuss this process, and together they will determine if this is the best plan of action in alignment with the incomplete process. If an incomplete is decided upon, they will communicate with each faculty/staff member to collaboratively determine and document the conditions of the incomplete in the appropriate form. The fully signed Incomplete Form must then be approved by the MSW program director (or Practice-Based Learning designee for internships) 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 internship as determined by the student's social work internship supervisor, faculty liaison, and the director of practice-based learning.

School of Social Work Academic Standards

Students must demonstrate consistent, satisfactory progress toward completion of their degrees across all semesters of academic coursework and Practice-Based Learning 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 social work profession (NASW) and University expectations, as well as with all Graduate School 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 internship 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 average of 3.0. 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 an internship within a reasonable period of time and/or termination from an 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 internship or the classroom learning environments.
- Impaired performance in the classroom or in an internship.
- 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 an internship 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 internship 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 Practice-Based Learning (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 SWIS 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 internship.

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.

Use of Self and 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, the School hold students accountable to performance standards in context of all settings and social interactions of relevance to their education and development as a social worker.

The School's approach to addressing 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 social work profession 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 social work profession 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 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 their degree based on any one of 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 Practice-Based Learning.
- 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.
- 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 Practice-Based Learning 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 standing and ad hoc committees as needed (e.g. search committees). 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 reflective of universal design for learning and social models of disability, created in collaboration with the Student Disability Center, 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 each and 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 missed classes; therefore, it is encouraged to consult with your instructor about the potential impact of missing class sessions. 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. The on-campus program is designated by the University as a resident instruction (RI), "face-to-face" program; therefore, attendance refers to in-person participation in courses, unless otherwise indicated. Depending on class learning objectives and class content, an exception to the above policy may be granted (such as hybrid or virtual attendance, etc.) in consultation with the instructor. Under such circumstances, a plan needs to be developed with your instructor to ensure alternative engagement aligns with class and/or assignment learning objectives.
- Students may be provided the opportunity to submit make-up work for up to 30% of missed class sessions when the make-up work aligns with the learning objectives of the assignment (quizzes, activities, etc.). Makeup work may not be permitted for assignments or tasks that, if altered, would fundamentally change the intent or learning objectives of the original assignment. For instance, group work involves creating a product and an outcome; in some instances, this might be able to be made up, and in others it might not. Therefore, you are encouraged to communicate proactively with the instructor to inquire about makeup work that satisfies learning objectives.
- 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 that outlines 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.

For additional information on University policies and policy resources, review the Graduate School's Policy & Procedures page.

Financial Information and Resources

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 (note that differential tuition may be assessed differently for students in dual or joint degree programs).

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 1st 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.

Graduate Assistantships
Graduate assistantships provide students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful experiences that support their academic and career goals. These positions often involve assisting with teaching, research, or administrative responsibilities within the university. The financial benefits and responsibilities of graduate assistants are outlined by the Graduate School and the General Catalog

If graduate assistantships are available, all admitted students will learn about this upon availability and be given an opportunity to apply. The scope of work will be outlined in the interview process, and each graduate assistant will work closely with a designated department personnel. Students will receive ongoing supervision and support, and students are encouraged to communicate regularly with their supervisors about their responsibilities and the balancing of their assistantship and courseload.

Please note that assistantships may not be available every year.

Student Support and Wellness Resources

CSU Employees and Instructors
Students may see employees and instructors during regularly scheduled office hours that are identified in course syllabi. Outside of these hours, students may request appointments in advance to meet with employees and course instructors.

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
- CSU Health Network
- Graduate School Diversity and Mentoring
- Graduate School Medical, Counseling, and Wellness Resources
- Graduate School Professional Development
- 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
- Survivor Advocacy and Feminist Education (SAFE) Center

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
2345 S Federal Boulevard, Suite 200, Denver, Colorado 80219
phone: 303-753-8890; fax: 303-753-8891
e-mail membership@socialworkers.org

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 Schaool of Social Work makes recommendations for admission to the Graduate School, and the Graduate School makes the decision on who will be offered admission.

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
- 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 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). Conditional admission may be offered to applicants whose GPA is below 3.0 based on the strength of other areas of the application, if recommended by the department. 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 one of the following areas: 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.
- The Graduate's Schools English proficiency requirements are:
    - 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). Conditional admission may be offered to applicants whose GPA is below 3.0 based on the strength of other areas of the application, if recommended by the department. There are a few strategies to bolster an application when the undergraduate GPA is below 3.0. Contact the graduate program coordinator for details.

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 3-5 pages total. 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 post high-school human services experiences you have had that relate to your goal of professional social work practice. Human service experiences is defined as direct service work with vulnerable and/or disadvantaged populations.
    - Sharing information about your experiences aids in the Admissions Committee learning more about your interest areas, any social work-related work experience, and/or ways you've demonstrated your commitment to social justice. The Admissions Committee is looking for detail, not brevity.
    - Human service experience is considered by the admission committee, but it is not a requirement.
- 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.

Two references (minimum) -

- It is recommended that one reference 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, SWIS, 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 -

- Official transcripts are only required after an applicant is offered admission. If admitted and accepting the offer of admission, applicants must arrange for an official transcript from each institution attended after high school be sent directly to CSU.

- Transcripts must be sent directly from those institutions to CSU to be official. If they are received from the applicant, they are not official and will not be accepted.

In addition to the above, MSW/MPH dual degree applicants and MSW/MACP joint degree applicants must also upload an extra essay addressing areas pertinent to the dual or joint degree. Refer to the Application Information and Admission Requirements page for additional information.

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

Upon being offered admission to CSU, review the Graduate School's guide for actions and resources to support the your graduate student journey.

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 students. 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 if you would like to request that electives be reviewed to fulfill the required elective credits (3 for Advanced Standing; 9 for full program). A maximum of 9 credits taken externally to CSU will be counted towards the MSW degree, and this applies only to elective credits. Final determinations about credit equivalency are completed through the Graduate School and the GS-6 Program of Study Resources, and this can only happen after a student is in the program.

Appendix C. Financial Considerations

On Campus Tuition*

Graduate Tuition per credit (with fees): $928.22
Cost for 3 credit course on campus (with differential tuition, $115/credit): $3,130

Online Tuition**

Graduate Tuition per credit (no fees assessed): $725. Increasing to $747 for students admitted after Spring 2026 and in Fall 2026 for all Graduate Certificate courses
Cost for 3 credit course online (no differential tuition assessed): $2,175. Increasing to $2,241

Full time student cost breakdown

Cost for 15 credits all on campus (with differential tuition): $8,826
Cost for 15 credits with one online elective (with differential tuition): $10,815 – $10,881

Full time student cost breakdown (online)

Cost for 15 credits online (no differential tuition assessed): $10,875 -$11,205

Part time student cost breakdown

Cost for 9 credits on campus (with differential tuition): $8,223

Part time student cost breakdown (online)

Cost for 9 credits online (no differential tuition assessed): $6,525 - $6,723

* On campus rate based on Fall 2025 tuition and is subject to change.
** Online tuition rate based on CSU Online tuition for Fall 2025.