



Social Work Department

STUDENT HANDBOOK



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SOCIAL WORK STUDENT HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Social Work Department at California State University, Stanislaus!

This handbook contains information about departmental policies, procedures, and commonly asked questions. Becoming familiar with the contents may well save you time and trouble as you continue through the MSW Program. You will also want to become familiar with other important sources of information including the CSU, Stanislaus Catalog, the CSU, Stanislaus Class Schedule, and the MSW Website (all available on-line).

The MSW Program is a Department within the College of Education, Kinesiology and Social Work, and is also under the auspices of the Graduate School. Policies set by the College and the Graduate School apply to the MSW Program. Graduate School policies especially relevant to MSW students are contained in the CSUS catalog and on the Graduate School website.

Be aware that policies summarized in this handbook and elsewhere are subject to ongoing review and revision. It is important that you stay in close communication with the MSW Program for the most current information. Information regarding the Social Work Department is also available on our website at www.csustan.edu/Social_Work/index.htm. Email and student mailboxes are frequently used to convey important information. Check your e-mail and student mailbox regularly and please be sure to keep all of your contact information current with the department.

MISSION

The Master of Social Work Program at California State University, Stanislaus prepares social workers to advance social justice. This education is committed to social change based on an analysis of social, political, and economic structures and their impact. This teaching and learning environment enables faculty, students, and graduates to collaborate with others to transform the conditions, which contribute to privilege and oppression. Graduates are prepared to use an advanced integrative practice approach to work with individuals, families, and communities to promote personal and collective liberation.

PROGRAM GOALS

To achieve its mission, the Social Work Program strives to:

1. Prepare professional social workers to engage with diverse populations in a process of critical reflection and action to address oppression and promote social justice.
2. Prepare professional social workers to engage in the struggle to understand and transform their biases.
3. Prepare professional social workers to use an integrative practice framework for multi-system interventions guided by ethics and informed by research.
4. Prepare professional social workers to assume leadership roles in meeting the social services needs of the region.
5. Create a learning environment based on principles of social justice where faculty and students participate in the development of knowledge that contributes to improving the social conditions in the region.
6. Create partnerships with community constituents based on principles of social justice that allow faculty and students to participate, as both leaders and learners, in the development of social work knowledge and service delivery systems.

The California State University, Stanislaus Department of Social Work mission is to provide education at the graduate level that is committed to social change based upon an analysis of social, political, and economic structures, and their impact. The focus is on collaboration with others to transform the conditions that contribute to privilege and oppression. The curriculum is conceptualized to address the Mission and achieve the program goals, in keeping with the Curriculum Policy Statement of the Council on Social Work Education. It is organized to prepare graduates for integrative practice with a generalist foundation.

At the cornerstone of the mission is the advanced Social Work Integrative Practice curriculum that encompasses solution-focused, narrative, cognitive-behavioral, and family-centered approaches to work with individuals and families. Community organizing, community development, social action, and advocacy are emphasized as macro-practice approaches. In the advanced year of the Masters of Social Work program students are exposed to the complex nature of social issues while striving to develop interventions and strategies for change that are multi-systemic. The conceptual frameworks that undergird the advanced year and the Integrative Practice Approach are: Ecological Perspective, Empowerment Theory, Strengths Perspective, Distributive Justice Model, and Cross Cultural Perspective.

Within the Advanced Integrative Practice curriculum, students are able to focus on various specialty areas of social work through the selection of advanced elective courses, including mental health, child welfare, and aging, among others.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES/COMPETENCIES

The MSW Program intends to graduate social workers who possess and demonstrate core competencies of professional social work practice based on the Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council on Social Work Education. Competency-based education is an outcome performance approach to curriculum design. Competencies are made up of measurable practice behaviors and are comprised of knowledge, values, and skills. The goal of the outcome approach is to demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Core competency outcomes include:

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The two-year MSW Program consists of four semesters of course work leading to the MSW Degree. This option is for students who can devote their time and attention to intensive study. Most classes taken by two-year students are in the daytime (i.e., 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.), but can be scheduled during evening hours as well. Elective courses are often at night. Field practicum is undertaken concurrently with a full load of classroom courses. No credit is given for life experience or previous work experience.

The three-year MSW Program is intended for students who need to spread their graduate studies over a longer period of time to accommodate other responsibilities. It must be emphasized, however, that the MSW Program is very demanding of time and energy, even when undertaken over the three year time period. Classes are typically scheduled in the evenings after 6:00 p.m. It is also extremely important for students to arrange for flexibility in work hours whenever possible. Field practicum is scheduled two full days a week. You are expected to be in your placement during the agency's normal hours of operation (daytime hours). Evening and weekend field placements are not available.

MSW Two Year Program

Fall (First Semester)

Year 1 – Foundation

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5000	Social Justice in Social Work
3	SW 5005	Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
3	SW 5020	Social Work Research Methods
3	SW 5030	Foundation I: Generalist SW Practice Using a Strengths Perspective
3	SW 5040	Field Instruction I (Foundation Practicum)
15		

Spring (Second Semester)

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5001	Social Welfare Policy and Services for Social Justice I
3	SW 5025	Current Trends in Social Work Research
3	SW 5031	Foundation II: Generalist SW Theory & Practice Using a Strengths Perspective
3	SW 5040	Field Instruction I (Foundation Practicum)
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
15		

Fall (Third Semester)

Year 2 – Advanced

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5002	Social Welfare Policy and Services for Social Justice II
3	SW 5032	Advanced Integrative Practice with Children, Adults and Families
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
1	SW 5960 <i>or</i> 5990	Graduate Project Advising I or Thesis Advising I
2	SW 5991	Capstone
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
15		

OR

EXAM SCHEDULE

3	SW 5002	Social Welfare Policy and Services for Social Justice II
3	SW 5032	Advanced Integrative Practice with Children, Adults and Families
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
6	SW 5xxx	(2) Elective Courses*
15		

Spring (Fourth Semester)

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5033	Advanced Integrative Practice with Groups
3	SW 5034	Advanced Integrative Theory & Practice with Community and Organizations
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
1	SW 5962 <i>or</i> 5992	Graduate Project Advising II or Thesis Advising II
2	SW 5991	Capstone
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*

15

OR

EXAM SCHEDULE

3	SW 5033	Advanced Integrative Practice with Groups
3	SW 5034	Advanced Integrative Practice with Community and Organizations
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
3	SW 5975	Culminating Seminar
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*

15

TOTAL 60 Units *Consult with your academic advisor

- Thesis/Project students 51 units required plus 9 units of electives
- Exam students 48 units required plus 12 units of electives
- Field Practicum days are Tuesdays and Thursdays

*Elective Courses

SW 5011 - Psycho-Social Assessment (3 units)

SW 5012 - Integrated Behavioral Health: Recovery, Resilience, Wellness (3 units)

SW 5013 - Social Work Practice with Death, Grief, and Loss (3 units)

SW 5014 - Law and Ethics in Social Work Practice (3 units)

SW 5016 - Social Work Practice with Trauma Survivors (3 units)

SW 5017 - Social Work in Healthcare (3 units)

SW 5042 - Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents Involved in the Justice System (3 units)

SW 5043 - Advanced Assessment and Intervention in Child Abuse and Neglect (3 units)

SW 5055 - Social Work Practice: Addictions (3 units)

SW 5058 - Gerontological Social Work (3 units)

SW 5060 - Child Welfare Information Systems (1 unit)

SW 5950 - Selected Topics in Social Work (1-5 units)

MSW Three Year Program

Fall (First Semester)

Year 1

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5000	Social Justice in Social Work
3	SW 5005	Human Behavior and the Social Environment I
3	SW 5030	Foundation I: Generalist SW Practice Using a Strengths Perspective
3	SW 5040	Field Instruction I (Foundation Practicum)
12		

Spring (Second Semester)

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5001	Social Welfare Policy and Services for Social Justice I
3	SW 5031	Foundation II: Generalist SW Theory & Practice Using a Strengths Perspective
3	SW 5040	Field Instruction I (Foundation Practicum)
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
12		

Fall (Third Semester)

Year 2

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5002	Social Welfare Policy and Services for Social Justice II
3	SW 5020	Social Work Research Methods
3	SW 5032	Advanced Integrative Practice with Children, Adults and Families
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
12		

Spring (Fourth Semester)

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
3	SW 5033	Advanced Integrative Practice with Groups
3	SW 5034	Advanced Integrative Theory & Practice with Community and Organizations
3	SW 5025	Current Trends in Social Work Research
3	SW 5041	Field Instruction II (Advanced Practicum)
12		

Fall (Fifth Semester)**Year 3**

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
1	SW 5960 <i>or</i> 5990	Graduate Project Advising I or Thesis Advising I
2	SW 5991	Capstone
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
6		
OR	EXAM SCHEDULE	
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
6		

Spring (Sixth Semester)

Units	SW NBR	Course Title
1	SW 5962 <i>or</i> 5992	Graduate Project Advising II or Thesis Advising II
2	SW 5991	Capstone
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
6		
OR	EXAM SCHEDULE	
3	SW 5975	Culminating Seminar
3	SW 5xxx	Elective Course*
6		

TOTAL 60 Units *Consult with your academic advisor

- Thesis/Project students 51 units required plus 9 units of electives
- Exam students 48 units required plus 12 units of electives
- Field Practicum days are Tuesdays and Thursdays

***Elective Courses**

SW 5011 - Psycho-Social Assessment (3 units)

SW 5012 - Integrated Behavioral Health: Recovery, Resilience, Wellness (3 units)

SW 5013 - Social Work Practice with Death, Grief, and Loss (3 units)

SW 5014 - Law and Ethics in Social Work Practice (3 units)

SW 5016 - Social Work Practice with Trauma Survivors (3units)

SW 5017 - Social Work in Healthcare (3 units)

SW 5042 - Social Work Practice with Children and Adolescents Involved in the Justice System (3 units)

SW 5043 - Advanced Assessment and Intervention in Child Abuse and Neglect (3 units)

SW 5055 - Social Work Practice: Addictions (3 units)

SW 5058 - Gerontological Social Work (3 units)

SW 5060 - Child Welfare Information Systems (1 unit)

SW 5950 - Selected Topics in Social Work (1-5 units)

ELECTIVES

Elective courses offered by the MSW Program are intended to contribute to the knowledge base, including focusing on specialty areas (child welfare, mental health, aging, etc.), and to address the mission of the program. With special permission, students can be able to take elective courses in other departments from 4000 or 5000 series. Acceptable 4000 level courses must be able to accommodate graduate students (more advanced learning assignments) and both the course instructor and the MSW academic advisor must approve of the registration prior to enrollment in the course. The student's academic advisor must approve any courses outside the MSW Program in advance. Approval will be based upon the student's individual goals and learning needs as well as relevance to the MSW curriculum. Failure to obtain approval in advance may prevent the student from receiving credit for any elective outside the Department.

WRITING PROFICIENCY

Graduate students are expected to demonstrate writing proficiency commensurate with graduate education and to be able to communicate effectively, in writing, with other professionals as well as the general public. Academic and research papers are to be submitted in accordance with the style of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, most recent (currently 7th) edition. Students who hold a Bachelor's degree from any CSU will have met the writing proficiency requirement. Graduate students who have not already met this requirement may satisfy the CSU writing proficiency requirement by successfully completing SW 5030 and SW 5031.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM PLAN

It is students' responsibility to be familiar with MSW Degree requirements and to keep track of when they will need to take particular courses. Students' faculty academic advisors can answer any questions students may have about their individual program plan. It is very important for students to check with their faculty advisor if they are considering any deviation from the usual sequencing of courses.

Keep a File: From time to time the Department will send students memoranda containing important information. Students may also receive correspondence from the University, Admissions and Records, or the Graduate School. Keeping a running file of all official actions regarding status, all copies of documents sent, all grade reports, all important memos regarding requirements, curriculum, field, due dates, etc., is extremely important. Students must take responsibility for their own academic status and requirements and keeping records of their progress.

REAPPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO THE MSW PROGRAM

CSU Stanislaus and the MSW department do not grant deferred admission. Applicants who have been offered admission to the MSW program but do not begin as MSW students in the year that they are offered admission must reapply to the MSW Program in the following year. When applicants reapply, they must submit a new MSW Department application and a new Criminal Records Statement. They may request to have their other application materials retrieved from the prior year's application file to be included in their new application packet. The applicant will then be considered in the new year's application review process along with all other applicants.

Any applicant re-applying to the MSW Program (or requesting inclusion in the next year's applicant pool) will also have to re-apply to the University for admission as a graduate student, and will be required to pay the University Application Fee. (The MSW department does not require a separate application fee).

Please note that this re-application process does not guarantee that the applicant will be offered admission to the MSW Program. The application will be reconsidered in light of the next year's applicant pool. Applicants requesting this process are encouraged (but are not required) to update their application file to include any new information that they believe will enhance their presentation for admission. The process of requesting the retrieval of prior year application file materials only applies to the year immediately following the first application year. After that time, applicants can be required to resubmit all application file documents.

LEAVES OF ABSENCE

According to University policy, a leave of absence may only be granted based on unavoidable circumstances beyond the control of the student. Students withdrawing from CSU Stanislaus who will not be registered for at least one semester each calendar year for reasons beyond their control (e.g., compulsory military duty, medical, pregnancy, etc.) may request a "leave of absence" to protect their right to degree requirements which were fixed at the time of admission to the University.

The SW Department requires submission of an "MSW Leave of Absence" request form and a written verification explaining the reason for non-enrollment. Financial reasons or failing grades are not acceptable justifications for Leave of Absence approval. The leave of absence only relates to the MSW Program and is separate from other University requirements. Approval of a leave of absence request to the MSW Department is not automatic or guaranteed, and each leave of absence request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

A student is expected to be in "good academic standing" in order to be considered and/or approved for a leave of absence from the MSW Program. Granting a leave of absence to a student in the MSW Program does not guarantee readmission to the University or exemption from the regular application for readmission procedures, application fees, and filing dates. Students may protect their University rights to a former catalog year for graduation requirements by enrolling at least part-time for one semester each calendar year.

Before returning from a leave of absence, the student is expected to meet with his/her faculty academic advisor to discuss how the leave has affected his/her planned program of work. In most cases, a leave will require an individualized revision of the student's plan of study in order to maintain the proper sequencing of courses.

TRANSFER CREDITS AND WAIVERS

MSW students are subject to the university's policies for Graduate School, which can be found in the catalog. When the department's policies are more restrictive than those of the Graduate School, policies of the department are enforced. The following are additional policies of the Social Work Program:

BSW Degree

Students with BSW degrees from accredited programs are advised to submit a written request and meet with the MSW Program Director prior to the beginning of fall courses in their first semester to determine whether any foundation year MSW courses are redundant with their undergraduate preparation. Such determination can be based on course syllabi, texts, informal testing (i.e., discussion of relevant concepts), or formal examination for each class. Specific courses found to be redundant in content with the student's undergraduate education can be waived for the MSW degree, but the "units" may not be waived. Students will replace any MSW course which is waived with an elective course in the program. Field practicum courses cannot be waived in the MSW Program.

Course Waivers/Challenges

- 1) Any student may request an opportunity to challenge required courses in the foundation year curriculum by passing a comprehensive written and oral examination in each course. Students must achieve a passing graduate level grade (B) on the exam. Time is made available prior to fall classes for this purpose. Such requests should be made in writing to the Director of the MSW Program. Requests must be submitted at least four weeks before the first day of class.
- 2) In compliance with CSU, Stanislaus Graduate School requirements, all courses waived, whether on the basis of BSW preparation or successful challenge examination, must be substituted with an approved elective so that a total of 60 units are completed for the MSW master's degree.
- 3) FIELDWORK courses are not subject to waiver or challenge.

Transfer Courses from Other MSW Programs

Each MSW graduate course taken at another CSWE accredited social work program in another university will be reviewed by an assigned faculty to determine acceptability of the course as a part of the CSU, Stanislaus Social Work Program. Subject to review and approval, a student may transfer course credits for a maximum of 30 units (1 year of study) from another graduate social work program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Under University policy, transfer of more than nine (9) semester units requires review and approval by the College Dean in addition to the MSW Program Director. Only courses comparable to the foundation curriculum of CSU, Stanislaus Master of Social Work Program will be accepted for credit toward the MSW degree. All transfer requests must be completed in writing and submitted to the MSW Program, preferably at the time of application, and not any later than the date of the admission decision.

PRACTICUM

During the course of the MSW Program, all students complete two field placements, usually in separate agency locations, for a total of 12 academic units (3 units each semester x 4 semesters). Before beginning the foundation field placement in the first year of study students are required to attend a field orientation. The first year practicum is considered a foundation placement. The advanced practicum placement is in the second year and should be consistent with one's career interests. Regularly scheduled field seminars are part of both first and second year placements. Information regarding seminars is provided by your assigned faculty liaison and will occur after your admission to the program and assignment to a field placement. Participation in integrative field seminars is **required** and field seminar hours considered a part of the required practicum hours.

First year foundation field placements provide an opportunity to apply social work practice skills using a generalist practice perspective. Students have the opportunity to work with several different systems in a variety of settings. The first year placement emphasizes the development of foundation social work practice skills including an understanding of the role of social work in addressing environmental conditions and social justice concerns that contribute to social problems. The practicum experience focuses on competencies, practice behaviors, skills, and values relevant to social work practice.

(More information about the field practicum experience can be found in the MSW Field Manual at www.csustan.edu/Social_Work/fieldeducation.html).

The advanced practicum is designed to offer learning experiences to prepare students for advanced social work practice. Students begin their advanced placement at the beginning of their second year of study. The advanced practicum experience focuses on competencies and advanced practice behaviors relevant to social work practice.

(More information about the field practicum experience can be found in the MSW Field Manual at www.csustan.edu/Social_Work/fieldeducation.html).

Using a concurrent placement model, first year students begin their placements in late August or early September and remain in their placements through the academic year. Students will register for the Field Practicum course in both the Fall and Spring semesters, although their agency assignment will not change.

In the second year of the MSW Program, students will be assigned a different placement in a different agency. Students register for Advanced Field Practicum in both the Fall and Spring semesters while remaining in a single placement for the academic year.

For students in the three-year program, there is no fieldwork in the third year. All students complete a minimum of 1000 hours in practicum; 500 hours in the foundation placement and 500 hours in the advanced placement. Approximately 24 hours per academic year is related to participation in seminar. Students are required to adhere to the published field calendar. Any requested changes in scheduling must be approved by the Field Instructor, the Faculty Liaison, and the MSW Field Coordinator.

Students in the two-year program will find it nearly impossible to work more than a minimal part-time job. Three-year students are strongly encouraged to reduce their hours of employment while enrolled in this graduate program. Flexible work hours are important because at this time there are no field placements available that offer evening and weekend hours. Additionally, field placements must be kept separate from a student's paid employment. It is possible, under very specific conditions, to arrange field placements in a different unit of the agency in which students are employed. Consultation and approval of the MSW Field Coordinator is required. (More information about the employer placements can be found in the MSW Field Manual at www.csustan.edu/Social_Work/fieldeducation.html).

CULMINATING EXPERIENCE

A culminating experience/assignment is required for each graduate degree. Culminating experience options in the MSW Program include a Master's Thesis, a Graduate Project, and a Comprehensive Examination. Students may choose which culminating assignment they wish to pursue. Decisions are made late in the first semester of the MSW program of study. Students are rarely able to change their culminating assignment choice after the choice has been made. In no case may students who have enrolled in thesis or project units in one semester be permitted to change to the comprehensive examination culminating experience after the initial semester of such enrollment.

1. A Master's Thesis is the written product of the systematic study of a significant problem. It clearly identifies the problem, states the major assumptions, explains the significance of the undertaking, sets forth the sources for and methods of gathering information, analyzes the data, and offers a conclusion or recommendation. The finished product must evidence originality, critical and independent thinking, appropriate organization and format, clarity of purpose, and accurate and thorough documentation. Normally, an oral defense of the thesis will be required.
2. A Graduate Project is a significant undertaking of a pursuit appropriate to the fine and applied arts or to professional fields. It must evidence originality and independent thinking, appropriate form and organization, and a rationale. The Graduate Project must be described and summarized in a written abstract that includes the following: project's significance, objectives, methodology, and a conclusion or recommendation. Normally, an oral defense of the graduate project will be required.
3. A Comprehensive Examination is an assessment of the student's ability to integrate the knowledge of an area, show critical and independent thinking, and demonstrate mastery of the subject matter. The results of the examination must evidence independent thinking, appropriate organization, critical analysis, and accuracy of documentation. A record of the examination questions and responses shall be maintained in the department.

There is no academic distinction made between a thesis, a project, or comprehensive examination. Each is equally acceptable as a means of fulfilling the requirements for the master's degree in social work. The candidate should ascertain specific departmental instructions or requirements before choosing a culminating assignment and before enrollment in any of these courses.

Whether a student is preparing a thesis, a project, or a comprehensive examination, it is important to note that the quality of the work accomplished is a major consideration in judging acceptability. The finished product must evidence originality, appropriate organization, clarity of purpose, critical analysis, accuracy, completeness of documentation, and adherence to Department and University criteria. Critical and independent thinking should characterize every

culminating assignment. Mere description, cataloging, compilation, or other superficial procedures are not adequate. The quality of the writing, format, and documentation for the Master's Thesis, Graduate Project, and Comprehensive Examination must meet standards approved by the department granting the degree. A final Master's Thesis or a Graduate Project must be submitted in the form of a traditional written research project and must conform to all requirements of the MSW Department, the University requirements described in Master's Degree Program Guidelines for Thesis and Project, and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, current (6th) edition. A Comprehensive Examination must be submitted in the form approved by the MSW Department and must conform to all requirements of the MSW Department and the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, current (6th) edition.

Registration for Culminating Assignment

Both the Master's Thesis and the Graduate Project are completed in two semesters with the student enrolled in SW 5990 and SW 5992 for a Master's Thesis, or SW 5960 and SW 5962 for a Graduate Project during consecutive semesters. Enrollment in the second semester of Master's Thesis or Graduate Project requires a Report in Progress (RP) grade in the first semester. A Special Registration Form is required to register for each semester for both the Master's Thesis and the Graduate Project. These are available on-line.

A Master's Thesis/Graduate Project committee chair and one additional full-time faculty will serve as a committee for each Thesis/Project. The primary responsibility for monitoring the student's progress in SW 5990 & 5992 or SW 5960 & 5962 rests with the student's thesis/project committee chair. However, the thesis/project committee members will also periodically review the student's work during the period of enrollment in SW 5990 & 5992 or SW 5960 & 5962. Students enrolled in Thesis (SW 5990 & 5992) or the Graduate Project (SW 5960 & 5962) must also enroll in the accompanying Capstone (SW 5991) course.

The Comprehensive Examination is to be completed in one (the final) semester of study, with the student enrolled in SW 5975 Culminating Seminar. Should a student not pass the Comprehensive Examination, one re-take opportunity will be provided prior to the completion of SW 5975. Should a student fail to pass the re-take Comprehensive Examination a 2nd and FINAL re-take in the Fall semester after completion of the MSW Program is allowed. Failure to pass the Examination at that point will result in failure to successfully complete the MSW Program and no degree being granted.

The SW 5975 Culminating Seminar course instructor has the responsibility of facilitating, monitoring, administering, and scoring the Comprehensive Examination. This is done in the context of and during enrollment in the SW 5975 Culminating Seminar course.

Culminating Assignment Prerequisites

Satisfactory completion of SW 5020 Social Work Research Methods and SW 5025 Current Trends in Social Work Research are required prior to enrollment in SW 5990, SW 5960, or SW 5975. Incomplete grades in these prerequisite courses must be made-up prior to enrollment in SW 5990, SW 5960, or SW 5975.

A student may enroll for the Master's Thesis, Graduate Project, or Culminating Seminar/Comprehensive Examination only when that student has been advanced to candidacy for the degree or when advancement to candidacy will occur in the semester of initial enrollment in SW 5990 or SW 5960.

GRADUATE GRADING PROCEDURES

The instructor of a student's academic performance bases grading in each course on evaluation. A student has the right to know all course requirements, including grading criteria and procedures, at the beginning of the course as specified in the course syllabus.

In general, the grading system and policy regulations governing grading and examinations in the Social Work Program are in conformity with those stated in the University catalog.

Grading Standards for Students in the MSW Degree Program

1. You must maintain an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B).
2. No course with a grade lower than C- can be applied toward the fulfillment of the MSW degree requirements.
3. If you fall below an overall 3.0 (B) grade point average in any given semester, you will be placed on academic probation.
4. If you are on academic probation and do not achieve an overall grade point average of 3.0 (B) during the next semester, you can be dismissed from the graduate program.
5. No more than six (6) credit hours of incomplete grades can be accumulated.
6. If you have completed requirements described in the Master's Thesis (SW 5990) or Graduate Project (SW 5960) syllabus you will receive a Report in Progress (RP) at the end of the semester. The RP grade will be changed to a letter grade at the completion of your thesis or project.
7. The Credit/No Credit system of grading applies to field practicum. These courses require satisfactory completion of practicum hours each semester to merit the Credit (CR) grade.
8. Failure in field practicum normally means that you will not be allowed to continue in the program unless certain conditions or requirements are met. (Refer to the MSW Field Practicum Manual for further information.)

INCOMPLETES AND WITHDRAWALS

If a student needs to withdraw from a course, or to request postponement of grading the student must do so formally, in writing, and in accordance with University regulations. Any incomplete in or withdrawal from a required course must be cleared from the academic record prior to enrolling in subsequent required courses in a given sequence.

Withdrawals

Policies and procedures governing withdrawal from a course can be found in the University catalog under Policies and Procedures. Failure to officially withdraw from a course results in a grade of "F" being recorded on the student's transcript.

Incompletes

An "Incomplete" is not automatically given when a student has not turned in all assignments for a given course. Rather, the student must initiate a request to the instructor, in writing, indicating reasons why the work was not completed and a plan for completing the missing work. The instructor will grant or deny this request and approve a final plan for completing the work.

If a student receives an Incomplete in any course it is also the student's responsibility to make sure the instructor files a change of grade form when the work is complete. Failure to change the incomplete to a letter grade by the date specified (or one year later if not specified) will result in an "F" being recorded on the transcript.

"Incomplete" for field practicum is not permitted except under very special circumstances. What constitutes an acceptable circumstance will be determined in an academic review or by the Coordinator of Field Practicum on a case-by-case basis.

GRADE APPEALS

Although the University presumes that grades assigned are correct, the University has established procedures to protect students against academic evaluations that are prejudicial, capricious, or arbitrary. The procedure is available equally to both undergraduate and graduate students and constitutes the only grade appeal procedure at CSU, Stanislaus. Information about the CSU Stanislaus Grade Appeal Policy and Procedures can be found at:

https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/groups/Office%20of%20Academic%20Programs/grade_appeal_procedures.8-09-11.pdf

Only final course grades are eligible to be appealed. Grades on individual assignments cannot be appealed. The only allowable grounds for appeal are prejudicial, capricious, or arbitrary grading by the instructor of the specific student appealing. The burden of proof rests upon the student. Therefore, a clear, coherent written statement of the basis for the grade appeal, together with any supporting documentation the student may wish to include, is important if the appeal goes beyond the instructor. The statement should support the change of grade requested; review committees normally will not consider any other possible change. The written statement for the appeal and the evidence supporting the appeal should avoid personal comments about the instructor.

Once filed with the MSW Program Director, the appeal must be forwarded through subsequent levels of the appeals process unless it is concluded. The appeal can be concluded by a denial of the grade change request, an approval of a grade change, or by a letter of withdrawal of the appeal from the student to the instructor and the Program Director.

Confidentiality of Grade Appeal

Grade appeal papers are confidential and are available only to the student, the instructor whose grade is being appealed, the Academic Advisor, MSW Program Director, the Dean of the College, and members of grade appeals committees. All phases of grade appeals shall be confidential. Cases shall be discussed by committee members only when the committee is in session.

Grade Appeal Procedure

- A. The student must initiate an appeal of a final grade for a course with the instructor involved within the first four weeks of the regular semester immediately following the semester in which the course was completed.
- B. If further action is deemed necessary, the student will next direct the appeal in writing to the MSW Program Director, who will consult with both the student and the instructor involved. If a student is appealing a grade assigned by the Program Director, the College Dean or designee shall perform all functions of the Director in the appeals process.
- C. If consultation does not resolve the appeal to the student's or the instructor's satisfaction, the Program Director will appoint a Grade Appeals Committee.

The appeals process will then continue in accordance with the University grade appeals procedures described in the University catalog

ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY

Near the end of the semester preceding enrollment in courses for the advanced concentration, or early in the first semester of the advanced program, students must prepare an Advancement to Candidacy form for the academic advisor's signature. This form lists all courses taken and the grades received as well as the courses that will be taken each semester until graduation. Thus, advancement to candidacy constitutes formal approval of the student's individual program of work. Forms are available in the MSW Office.

To be advanced to candidacy, a student must have:

1. Completed at least two semesters of foundation course requirements.
2. A GPA of at least 3.0.
3. Have no grade below a "C-".

GRADUATE STUDENT ADVISING

Students will be assigned a faculty academic advisor to provide necessary support as they pursue their educational and professional objectives in the Social Work Program.

Objectives

The specific objectives of student advising are to:

1. Assist students in assessing aptitude and motivation for a career in social work. Help students develop knowledge about field settings and evaluate interests and needs in the field.
2. Guide students in the selection of elective course work.
4. Provide periodic monitoring of students' academic performance.
5. Provide suggestions, alternatives, and means whereby students can move into another major or career choice as easily as possible.
6. Provide consultation, support, and guidance if students have difficulties or concerns related to the program.

Routine Advising Contacts

1. The first contact between students and their faculty advisor is expected to take place, possibly in a group, during an orientation meeting for incoming students in the fall semester of the first year. This meeting will enable students to become acquainted with their advisors prior to beginning academic work.
2. Thereafter, contacts can be scheduled when students would like consultation, feedback, information, or an opportunity to explore educational and professional concerns.
3. Before completing the advancement to candidacy form, the student and the advisor should communicate to discuss advanced program and elective plans and concerns.
4. If a student is having academic difficulties, he/she should contact his/her academic advisor. In addition, if a student is having academic difficulties the course instructor may inform the academic advisor. In either case, the student and the advisor should meet to discuss how to address the problem. This procedure is intended to ensure that problems are not left unattended, that all possible assistance and support are made available to the student, and that all necessary actions are taken.
5. The Program Director and/or course instructor will notify the academic advisor of any grade of C, D, F, I or NC a student receives.
6. Any changes of student status in the program must be reviewed by the Program Director. Either the Academic Advisor or Program Director will also place documentation in the student's file.

Changing Advisors

If a student wishes to change academic advisors, this can be accomplished with a written request to the Program Director. Before the change is made, the current advisor will be informed of the request. The student may consult the Program Director prior to writing a formal request.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Respect for ownership and the expression of ideas is fundamental to advancing civilization, and it is a central feature of academic integrity. Law protects the expression of ideas and appropriate citation credit is an ethical requirement for all scholarship. Plagiarism and any other representations in which a person knowingly presents the works of another without proper citation is cause for disciplinary action.

Students will be expected to conform to the rules of scholastic honesty as outlined by the University and instances of academic dishonesty will be handled per University policies regarding plagiarism and academic misconduct. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination from the MSW Program. Disciplinary policies and procedures can be found on-line at the CSU, Stanislaus Office of Judicial Affairs. <https://www.csustan.edu/judicial-affairs/student-responsibilities>

STUDENTS SEEKING SUPPORT WITHIN THE MSW PROGRAM ABOUT A NON-ACADEMIC ISSUE

The Master of Social Work Department is strongly committed to helping students maximize their learning experiences in both their academic and field programs. The MSW program expects students and department members (faculty, staff, and administration) to work collaboratively to address academic and non-academic concerns or challenges. Students may identify or experience academic and non-academic concerns and challenges that require resolution.

This process is for students who feel they have a *non-academic* concern regarding another student, a department member, or the MSW Department practices, policies and procedures. If a student has an *academic* (e.g. grade appeal) concern, the student should contact their academic adviser.

If the concern is between a student and another student, a student and a faculty or department member, or between a student(s) and the MSW Department practices, policies and procedures, the student(s) has rights!

First, the student(s) should assess if behavior violates the:

1. National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics:
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics>,
2. Title IX Educational Amendments of 1972, which prohibits discrimination based on gender, including sex and gender identity or expression, or sexual orientation:
<https://www.csustan.edu/compliance/title-ix-and-gender-equity>, and/or

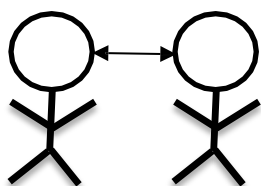
If the issue is a Title IX harassment or concern, the student should follow the recommendations of the appropriate statutes or law(s).

If the student wishes to pursue resolution with another student, faculty or staff, or MSW Department practices, policies and procedures, the following process is recommended. The student has the option to continue the process or withdraw at any time.

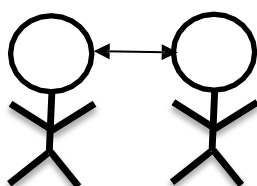
Step 1

DIRECT ENGAGEMENT

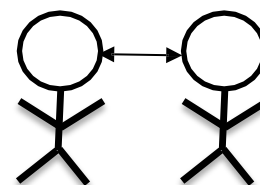
The student is encouraged to communicate directly with the involved student, faculty or staff member, or MSW Department representative. The student should outline their concern(s), plans to mediate the issue, and recommended action steps to resolve the situation. If, after discussion and attempted problem solving, the student feels the situation remains unresolved, they may move to Step 2.



Student to Student



Student to Faculty/ Staff

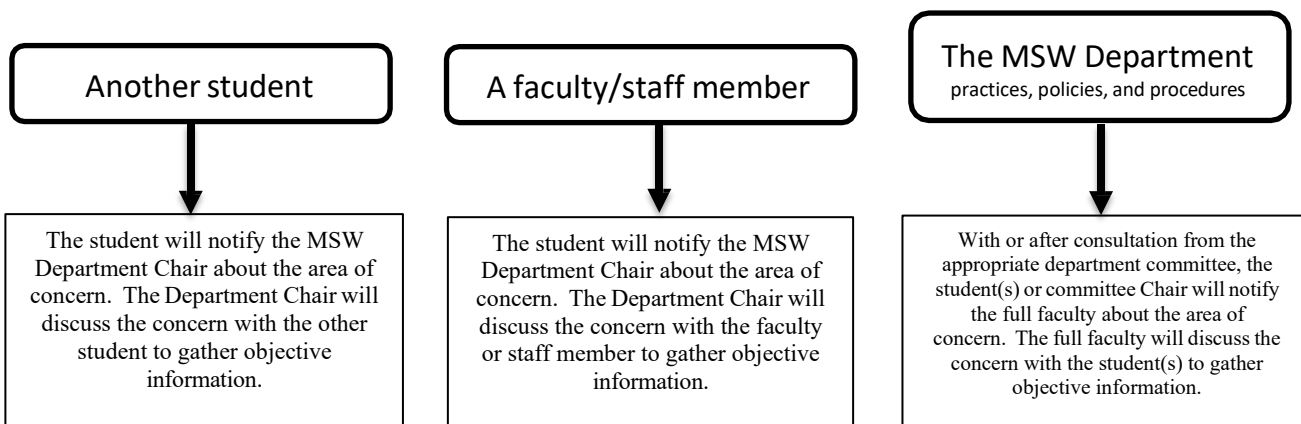


Student to MSW Department
(Practices, policies and procedures)

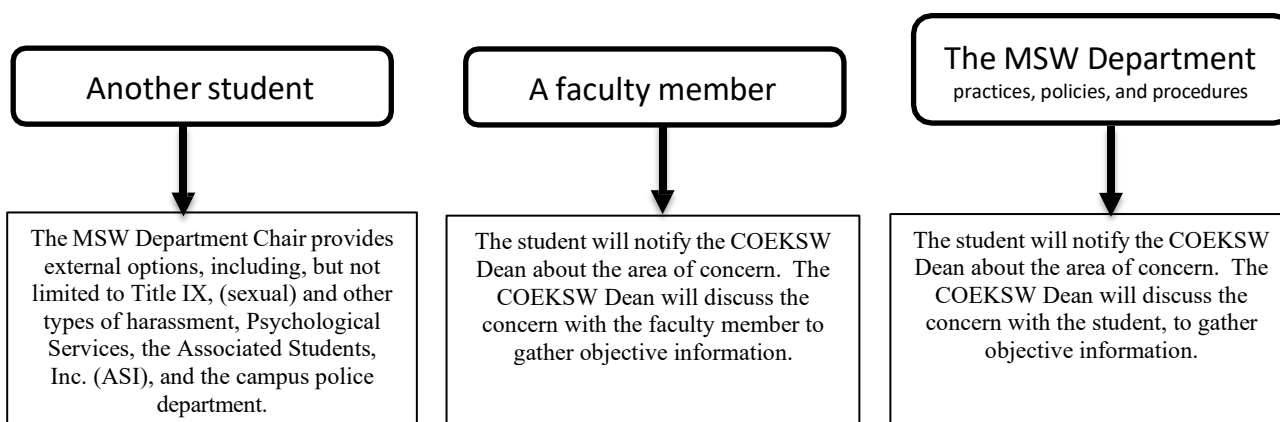
Initial discussion with the Chair of the appropriate department committee. If related to curriculum, direct concern to the Curriculum Committee, if related to the general student body, direct concern to the Student Affairs Committee, and so on.

Step 2**SOLICITATION OF SUPPORT**

If the concern is between the student and...



If the concern is resolved at this step, STOP, there is nothing else to do. If the concern is not resolved at this step, the student has the option to continue the process or withdraw at any time.

Step 3**SOLICITATION OF SUPPORT**

If the situation is resolved at this step, STOP, there is nothing else to do. If the issue is not resolved at this step, the student has the option to continue the process or withdraw at any time.

Step 4**(external) SOLICITATION OF SUPPORT**

The student(s) can solicit support from another campus-based department of their choice, for example, the Dean of Students (<https://www.csustan.edu/student-affairs/dean-students>) or Associated Students, Inc. (<https://www.csustan.edu/asi-sc/associated-students-inc>) for support.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND TERMINATION

The Social Work Department is strongly committed to helping students maximize their learning opportunities and experiences in both the classroom and field settings. Potential performance concerns and demonstrated difficulties, both personal and educational in nature, require early intervention to allow for positive resolution whenever possible. The expectation is that faculty and students will work collaboratively to address student performance concerns. Early identification of concerns and inclusion of the academic advisor are the ideal approach to identifying necessary support for the student to successfully address concerns.

While the preferred outcome is to support students to address performance concerns, there can be circumstances where it is possible that a student will be terminated from the MSW program prior to completion of the program. Some circumstances under which termination from the MSW program may occur include:

- Grade point average falls below 3.0 for more than one semester.
- Receiving no credit in field practicum.
- Failing to meet standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice.
- Consistent failure to demonstrate effective interpersonal skills necessary for forming professional helping relationships (for example; unable to demonstrate non-judgmental attitude, unable to allow client self-determination; etc.).
- Consistent failure to meet student-learning outcomes or demonstrate the required social work competencies (in class or field placement).
- Unethical behavior as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics, in a situation where a student knew or should have known that the behavior was unethical.

When university faculty and/or an agency partner (field instructor/task supervisor) identify area(s) of concern, the concern(s) should be immediately communicated to the student and to the academic advisor. The 3-Step process outlined below will be followed and clear documentation is required for each step in the process.

Step 1: Informal Discussion

The faculty member (and agency partner if it involves a field issue) will informally notify the student about area(s) of concern. Both the student and the faculty member should make the academic advisor aware of the situation. All those involved in this informal discussion, including the student, are responsible for keeping their own documentation regarding the concern and suggested course of action. If the concern remains unresolved, the faculty should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Formal Meeting & 2-Week Action Plan

A formal meeting between the student, faculty (and agency partner if it involves a field issue) and the academic advisor will occur. Where the faculty member who brings forward the student concern is also the student's academic advisor, another MSW faculty member will serve as the academic advisor. The purpose of this meeting is to complete a written 2 week action plan using the *Action Plan* form. The academic advisor takes a lead in completing the form, with input from faculty (and the agency partner if it involves a field issue) and the student.

All parties who participate in this meeting sign and receive a copy of the 2-Week *Action Plan*. The academic advisor forwards a copy of the *Action Plan* to the MSW Department Chair and places a copy on the student's academic file.

Possible Outcomes

1. Concern resolved within the 2 week period;
2. Resolution not reached within the 2 week period, but evidence of progress warrants continuation of the action steps outlined in the plan (update contract with new date of review). Student remains in the class/agency and a revised *Action Plan* is developed.

Faculty (and agency partner if it involves a field issue) monitors student progress during the designated timeframe and provides the student with ongoing feedback. Every effort will be made to provide appropriate learning opportunities allowing the student to demonstrate adequate progress. A student can be required to complete additional practicum hours.

3. Should satisfactory progress not be indicated within the period of the Action Plan faculty might recommend the concern proceed to the *Student Performance Review Committee* at this time – proceed to Step 3.

Possible additional outcomes specific to SW5040 & SW5041 (Field):

4. Faculty, in consultation with the agency partner, may recommend the student be reassigned to another agency. Written documentation detailing the reason for the reassignment, the field faculty in coordination with the field coordinator will develop specific expectations, and the objectives of the new field placement. Reassignment requires a clearly defined action plan agreed upon by all parties, including the student.
5. The student may receive no credit (NC) based on lack of mastery of the course competencies, hours completed, or violation of NASW Code of Ethics or university policy. A student who receives NC in field may pursue a Grade Appeal by following the University's Grade Appeal process.
6. Students receiving NC in field can be referred to the *Student Performance Review Committee*.

Step 3: **Student Performance Review Committee**

Faculty requests a student review by the *Student Performance Review Committee*. The request is submitted in writing, along with all relevant documentation to the MSW Department Chair. Once the MSW Department Chair receives all the necessary materials, they schedule a *Committee* meeting within 10 working days.

Members of the *Student Performance Review Committee* are determined at the outset of each academic year and include two MSW faculty members and one external university faculty member. (Should a *committee* member be directly involved in the student situation another MSW faculty will be asked to serve on the *committee*). All documentation is provided to the *committee* members to review. Should *committee* members feel they require more information they may request to meet with any of the involved parties in advance of the formal review meeting.

The student is invited to the scheduled *Committee* meeting to present their perspective. The student may choose an advocate to attend the meeting with them. The advocate can be, but is not required to be, the academic advisor. The advocate must be a university faculty, from either within the social work department, or from another CSU university department/faculty.

The purpose of the *Student Performance Review Committee* is to evaluate the student's status in the MSW Program. There are two possible outcomes:

1. If after reviewing the overall situation, the *Committee* determines that the student is to remain in the program, the *Committee* recommends action steps to be taken to provide another opportunity for the student to succeed in the program and provides suggestions for any planning that is needed to support student success.
2. The committee may recommend termination from the program.

The committee forwards a written report that outlines the committee rationale and decision to the MSW Department Chair. The MSW Department Chair will communicate the decision of the *Student Performance Review Committee* in writing to the student within 7 business days of the *Review* meeting. The student under review may appeal the decision in writing within 10 business days to the MSW Department Chair. The Department Chair decision will be final.

Emergency Situations or Critical Incidents

In any situation where there is imminent risk to the safety of students or faculty (and/or agency partners/clients) prior procedures are waived and the student is immediately asked to leave the classroom or the field agency. Information regarding the incident will be immediately referred to the appropriate University office (Dean of Students, Public Safety, Red Folder protocol). Under such circumstances, faculty to the Student Performance Review Committee will immediately refer the student/situation. The *Committee* will meet within 5 working days of the incident to review the student's status in the MSW Program, following the procedures articulated in Step 3.

STUDENT ASSOCIATION

All MSW students are automatically members of the Master of Social Work Student Association (MSWSA) and are encouraged to become actively involved. The Master of Social Work Student Association (MSWSA) is an active organization that serves to represent student interests and opinions in departmental policy-making processes, facilitate communication between students and faculty, sponsor events that facilitate networking and cohesion among students, and foster linkage with other student organizations on campus. Efforts are made to schedule meetings to accommodate both two-year and three-year students to encourage response from all students.

Each year, representatives are elected from each class to further communication between all students and the association.

The Association's purpose is to promote the following:

1. Improve communication among students of the Social Work Department and the University at large.
2. Improve communication between students of Social Work and the Social Work Faculty.
3. Increase participation of students of Social Work in the decision-making processes, which affect their college careers.
4. Increase students' community involvement and awareness through outreach programs.
5. Collaborate with the Department in planning the MSW Hooding Ceremony.

MSW students elect the officers of the Student Association annually. The Student Association may also select students to represent them on the following MSW Department Committees: Curriculum, Student Affairs, Field Practicum, Admissions and Recruitment, Research and Evaluation, and the Community Advisory Board.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORK (NASW)

Students are strongly encouraged to join NASW and to become active in the professional association. Membership applications are available from the Department of Social Work or online at <https://www.socialworkers.org>. Students enjoy a substantially reduced dues rate.

Benefits of membership in NASW include:

- NASW News, a monthly, national newspaper;
- NASW California News, a monthly, state newspaper;
- Social Work, a bimonthly professional journal;
- Reduced rates on other NASW journals;
- Access to conferences and continuing education programs; and
- Opportunities for professional development locally and at the state level.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND TITLE IX

California State University Stanislaus does not discriminate based on sex, gender, or sexual orientation in its education programs or activities. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and certain other federal and state laws, prohibit discrimination based on sex in all education programs and activities operated by the university (both on and off campus). Title IX protects all people regardless of their gender or gender identity from sex discrimination, which includes sexual harassment and violence.

The Department of Social Work fosters a learning environment free from sexual/gender harassment or discrimination of any kind. Students can rely on support and resources for addressing and resolving problems or complaints. If you believe you have been subjected to discrimination or harassment of any form covered under the protections afforded by Title IX, including sexual assault, you should contact the CSU Stanislaus Title IX Coordinator to discuss your situation. More broadly, anyone who knows or suspects that an employee or student is being subjected to discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, should report that information to CSU Stanislaus Title IX Coordinator.

For information on the purpose, elements, and history of Title IX, please access the following link: [Title IX - Working to Ensure Gender Equity in Education.pdf](#)

For information on issues related to sexual assault on college campuses, please access the following link: [Title IX - Campus Sexual Assault Policy.pdf](#)

For more information specific to Title IX at California State University Stanislaus and contact information for the CSU Stanislaus Title IX Coordinator: <https://www.csustan.edu/title-ix>

NONDISCRIMINATION

The Social Work Department has policies and procedures to guard against discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, or sexual orientation. This includes policies and procedures for recruitment and hiring of faculty and staff, and recruitment and admission of students.

The Social Work Department has adopted the following policy:

The Master of Social Work Program is committed to provide an educational experience that prepares students to work effectively with diverse populations as defined by ethnicity, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation and physical and mental disabilities. All affairs of the Master of Social Work Program are conducted without discrimination based on race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, or sexual orientation. We support the University policy of nondiscrimination as detailed in the University's Equal Opportunity Policy. The program is committed to developing and maintaining a faculty and student body that represent the diversity of the region, state, and country. We are working toward a teaching and learning environment that supports sensitivity, mutual understanding, and collaboration among all participants. Further, the program is committed to offering learning experiences that provide an opportunity for students to be exposed to values and ethics that reflect commitment to affirmative action toward equity and justice in the profession and the society at large.

CAMPUS RESOURCES/SOURCES OF INFORMATION

SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM	DBH122	209-667-3091
Student Lounge	DBH109	OBTAIN CODE FROM MSW OFFICE
GRADUATE SCHOOL	MSR140	209-667-3129
STUDENT SERVICES		
• ENROLLMENT SERVICES	MSR120	209-667-3264
• ADMISSIONS & OUTREACH SERVICES	MSR140	209-667-3070
• FINANCIAL AID	MSR100	209-667- 3336
• PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING SERVICES	Student Services Annex, SSX1.1	209-667-3381
• DISABILITY RESOURCE SERVICES	Vasché Library, L150A	209-667-3159
• VETERAN'S SERVICES	Student Services Building, Room 113	209-667-3081
• TUTORING CENTER	Vasché Library, L222	209-667-3642
• BOOKSTORE		209-667-3161
• LIBRARY		209-667-3234
• HEALTH SERVICES	HEALTH CENTER	209-667-3396
OFFICE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	Vasché Library, L256	209-667-3687
PUBLIC SAFETY	University Police Department	209-667-3114
DOCUMENTS		
MSW FIELD PRACTICUM MANUAL	https://www.csustan.edu/sites/default/files/2022-06/field_practicum_manual.pdf	
CSUS CATALOG	http://www.csustan.edu/Catalog/	
CSUS SCHEDULE OF CLASSES STUDENT	http://www.csustan.edu/classschedule/	

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