

**Boise State University  
School of Social Work  
Boise, Idaho**

**MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK**

**AND**

**ORIENTATION**



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# **Educational Requirements and Program Curriculum**

## **Overview**

The Master of Social Work (MSW) is a two-year, full-time graduate program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The program prepares students for advanced direct practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities, to address the multiple social systems that affect Individuals and Families, which constitutes the single program concentration. Students learn clinical, organizational, policy, and administrative skills necessary for promoting social and economic justice. Program goals are to educate students for agency-based, culturally sensitive practice founded on strengths, diversity, and ecological theories.

## **Mission**

The Boise State University Master of Social Work Program is dedicated to educating students for advanced direct practice with individuals and families within the context of varying systems—households, groups, organizations, and communities. The school’s philosophy of social and economic justice, egalitarianism, and respect for diversity reflects a strengths perspective that addresses populations at risk.

The following values, assumptions, concepts, principles, and data underlie the Mission:

1. The Mission is grounded in distinctive local characteristics and needs and certain values integral to social work education and the social work profession:
  - a. The values of equal opportunity, enhanced functioning, and systemic responsiveness to human needs, for all people, in all dimensions of life and its organization, define our mission. These values reflect our commitment to address the needs of populations at risk, especially those of the historically oppressed and disenfranchised.
  - b. The at-risk and/or historically oppressed populations of the State of Idaho include all children and families, rural and urban, who live in poverty; gays and lesbians; the aged; persons with disabilities; and peoples of color, in particular, American Indian, Alaska Native, and First Nations peoples; Latino, Chicano, or Mexican Americans; African Americans; and Asian Americans.
  - c. Social work services in the State of Idaho are delivered primarily by public (federal, state, county, and municipal) and nonprofit agencies and institutions. These arenas have an ongoing need for social workers with advanced direct practice skills ranging from individual and family clinical services to the mezzo and macro skills for community organization, planning, administration, and general policy practice.
2. The Boise State University School of Social Work prepares graduates at two levels:
  - a. The Bachelor of Social Work Program consists of an undergraduate liberal arts education; a foundation of social work values, knowledge, and skills for beginning generalist practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities; and preparation for graduate education.



- b. Such an approach furthers inclusion in “paradigms and paradigm-building ... the voices and visions of . . . previously excluded” (Shriver, 1995, p. 16) individuals, groups, and communities.
- c. Supporting, fostering, and attending to people’s own positive capacities for growth and well-being—their beliefs, values, experiences, talents, resources, and aspirations—raise the probability that they will act on those strengths, and grow and develop in the process. Personal and group awareness of inherent strengths is a vital form of knowledge that may inspire and inform personal and social transformation.
- d. The concepts of empowerment, membership, suspension of disbelief, synergy, dialog, collaboration, regeneration, and healing from within define the essence and purpose of social work—to preserve, promote, and restore human health and dignity; celebrate and benefit from human diversity; and advance social progress.
- e. Clients and client systems are the experts on their own lives, hence the social work relationship should be one of collaboration and dialog that fosters a communal basis for knowledge exchange. De-emphasizing power differentials between social workers and clients tend to enhance mutuality and client growth, in terms of personal and social power.
  - (a) A strengths perspective suggests that power is inherent in all human beings, and rejects the notion that power and resources are zero-sum commodities to be used by one person or group to dominate another.
  - (b) Coercive and exploitive power is expressed in often-interlocking forms of economic, racial, sexual, cultural, and class oppression. Social work that reflects a strengths perspective models sharing of power and resources whenever possible, to promote client participation in decisions that affect their lives and enhance opportunities for all to achieve their full human potential.

(Solomon, 1976; Lee, 1994; Beebe et al., 1995; Shriver, 1995; Saleeby, 1997)

## **The Objectives of the Masters Degree Program at BSU**

The Master of Social Work program's objectives prepare students to (1) build on the foundation of social work practice, in order to become knowledgeable about a range of social systems and how they affect social functioning, (2) gain an appreciation for the role of research in professional practice, (3) recognize a life-long obligation to continue the process of learning and skills development, (4) develop a strong sense of commitment to ethical practice that includes services to the poor and oppressed that promotes equality and social justice, and (5) prepare students for agency based practice to meet the social service needs of the State of Idaho.

In the following areas, utilizing a strengths perspective, graduates of the Master of Social Work program will be able to:

1. Content Area: Dynamic interaction between individual adjustment (bio-psycho-social functioning) and the environment (the family, the group, and the community).
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge about the personality system: individual growth and development—psychological, biological, social, and cultural;
  - b. Demonstrate knowledge about patterns of adaptation for individuals and formulate a sound bio-psycho-social assessment;
  - c. Demonstrate knowledge about the dynamics of the interactional system (i.e., the family—structure, roles, and patterns of communication) and formulate an assessment;
  - d. Demonstrate knowledge about the dynamics of the sociocultural system:
    - (i.) identify local, state, and national institutions that support individuals and families;
    - (ii.) identify resources and gaps in resources within the local and state service delivery networks needed to support individuals and families.
2. Content Area: Oppression and discrimination.
  - a. Demonstrate knowledge about the social, economic and institutional factors that promote healthy growth and development for individuals and families, including populations at-risk, in contrast to those factors that restrict healthy growth and development;
  - b. Identify personal values, including biases and prejudices, and reduce the influence of the latter two characteristics in order to engage in ethical social work practice.
  - c. Demonstrate knowledge of the manifestations of oppression and discrimination particular to the state of Idaho.
3. Content Area: Theories of change and the ability to intervene on behalf of individuals, families, and groups to prevent, ameliorate, and/or resolve unmet needs—as advocate, broker, mediator, and case manager.
  - a. Apply strategic skills to engage community and political systems for the development of programs and resources;
  - b. Evaluate service delivery programs contributing to enhanced service delivery.
4. Content Area: Direct interventions with individuals, families, and groups to address intrapersonal and interpersonal challenges.

- a. Apply intervention knowledge and skills that utilize a strengths perspective and focus on prevention.
  - b. Apply empowering techniques that enable individuals, families and groups to bring about positive change in their environment.
  - c. Utilize supervision and consultation in order to promote professional growth and provide effective interventions and services to clients.
5. Content Area: Assessment skills to gauge community support to address individual, family, and group needs.
- a. Conduct needs assessments in order to identify community issues;
  - b. Assess the degree of public support for the allocation of resources to prevent, alleviate, and resolve issues of concern to individuals, families and groups.
6. Content Area: Qualitative and quantitative research methods to conduct outcome assessments.
- a. Apply basic research designs and statistical and qualitative analyses.
  - b. Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of social services delivery programs,
  - c. Evaluate the effectiveness of one's own practice interventions.
7. Content Area: Commitment to social work that promotes social and economic justice with respect for the value, dignity, and freedom of individuals, families, disenfranchised groups and populations at-risk.
- a. Identify with social work as a profession,
  - b. Utilizing a strengths perspective, promote social and economic justice for all people including women, people of diverse cultural, racial, ethnic or religious identity, diverse affectional orientation and other populations at-risk.
  - c. Engage in ethical social work practice,
  - d. Exercise an active role in community service.

### **The Goals of the Masters Degree Program at BSU**

1. Provision of an education program that prepares graduate students for advanced direct practice utilizing a strengths perspective.
2. Provision of an education program that prepares graduate students for culturally sensitive practice with individuals, families, groups, households and communities.
3. Support faculty, staff and student diversity.
4. Make agency-based practice the major focus of the program to meet the needs of the State of Idaho.
5. Support faculty involvement in research and demonstration projects.
6. An emphasis on social work practice that is based on the values and ethics that guide the social work profession.

## **Organization of the Curriculum**

The MSW curriculum is organized within a two-year framework of a professional foundation year and an advanced direct practice concentration second year. The curriculum emphasizes the “person-in-environment” theoretical perspective which reflects a multilevel model of human behavior, consisting of the personality, interactional, and sociocultural systems. Throughout the curriculum, the liberal arts perspective encourages students to draw from a broad array of disciplines in their efforts to understand and address the needs of individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities. The professional foundation year emphasizes knowledge, skills, and values for strengths-based social work practice with individuals, families, households, groups, organizations, and communities. During the foundation year, all students are required to take at least one course in each of the following foundation areas: human behavior and social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field practicum.

The second year of the MSW curriculum offers one concentration: advanced direct practice with individuals and families. Students are prepared for advanced direct practice with individuals and families within the context of varying system sizes. This implies that interventions may be directed toward any of these entities that will facilitate and enhance the quality of life for individuals and families. The concentration is shaped by three themes: the development of independent inquiry, a commitment to the tradition of promoting social and economic justice and equality, and a commitment to individual and family well-being.

The graduate curriculum consists of 61 semester credit hours. There are 43 credits of academic work inclusive of labs and seminars. Field practicum provides for 900 clock hours of supervised social work practice, comprising 18 semester credit hours. The curriculum is designed to be completed in two years of full-time study. Currently, there are no provisions for part-time study. Students who have a Baccalaureate degree from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education may qualify for the advanced standing program. A student entering under the advanced standing program must complete the program within one calendar year, earning 38 semester credits including 600 clock hours of supervised social work practice or 12 semester credit hours. Advanced standing students complete three courses during the summer prior to their enrollment in the second year.

The curriculum content is organized sequentially and there is a logical flow within the curriculum and between the major content areas. Each course builds upon and is integrated with other courses from the liberal arts base and the curriculum content areas. By reviewing course objectives, it is possible to see the sequencing of course content. Courses move from identifying the social forces and dynamics that create the need for social welfare through the integration of theoretical and experiential content for advanced direct social work practice. The student is moved from theoretical understanding to practice.

Adult learning theory is used in many of the classes as students are recognized for the richness of experience they bring into the classroom and the focus on practice relevance. Throughout the curriculum, connections are made to social work practice by using case examples, experiential exercises, role-plays, videotaping, and the use of individual learning formats.

## Course Offerings (Excerpt from 2003-2004 Graduate Catalog)

**SOCWRK 502 HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIAL WORK (3-0-3)(F).** The major purpose of this course is to place the profession of Social Work within historical context. The course explores the development of social welfare institutions and the social work profession in the United States, emphasizing social welfare issues and social policy and programmatic responses since 1945. This course also examines the impact of human diversity on socioeconomic and political statuses and access to social welfare resources and social work services.

**SOCWRK 503 GENERAL METHODS I: SMALL SYSTEMS (MICRO) (3-0-3)(F).** Using a strengths perspective, this course focuses on the development of professional skills associated with the provision of human services to individuals, families, and small groups. Topics include the process and content of social work interactions and professional relationships and the theoretical underpinnings of empowerment and strengths-based practice. Students gain knowledge about social work values and ethical issues encountered in practice settings. Approaches and practice skills with individuals from differing social, gender, cultural, racial, religious, spiritual, and class backgrounds are examined. COREQ: SOCWRK 504.

**SOCWRK 504 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE SKILLS (2-0-2)(F).** Using a strengths perspective, this course focuses on the development and practice of interpersonal and communication skills associated with the provision of human services to individuals, families, and small groups. The major emphasis in this experiential course is on the acquisition of skills utilized in the helping interview. Communication and practice skills with individuals from differing social, gender, cultural, racial, religious, spiritual, and class backgrounds are discussed. COREQ: SOCWRK 503.

**SOCWRK 505 SOCIAL POLICY ANALYSIS (3-0-3)(S).** SOCWRK 505 critically examines contemporary welfare policies, in a value-analytic framework, and in the context of the United States political economy. Emphasis is placed on values of equity, adequacy and universality of access to basic social and economic security. Policy practice skills include identification and evaluation of policy problems, including their empirical and value-dimensions, and skills in policy advocacy with legislators and with the general public. Major importance is placed on policies and programs that impact populations at-risk, such as women and families, people of color including leading ethnic minority groups in Idaho and the region, and such easily disadvantaged groups as children, persons of varying physical and mental ability, and the aged. Professional practice values are emphasized.

**SOCWRK 506 INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES: POLICY AND LEGISLATION (3-0-3)(F).** This advanced policy course is designed to prepare students with the knowledge and skills to analyze, design, and advocate for social welfare policy and programs, with a specific focus on policies and programs which affect families and children. The course examines various theoretical approaches to articulating family policy, as well as current policy issues and legislation. Emphasis is placed on the examination of research on family needs, and the critique of cultural values and ideological orientations which undergrad policy

**SOCWRK 512 HUMAN DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE LIFE CYCLE (3-0-3)(F).** Theories of human development, life stage, and subordinate group oppression will be the focus of this course. In particular, psychodynamic and cognitive humanist theories will be examined,

as well as current theories of the psychologies of women and people of color. The interrelationships of sociohistorical, sociocultural, socioeconomic, interpersonal, and psychological influences on human development will be explored, with an emphasis on factors of gender, affectional orientation, ethnicity, race, and class.

**SOCWRK 514 ETHNICITY, GENDER AND CLASS (1-0-1)(F,SU).** This experiential course in a small group format is designed to provide a positive environment for students' exploration of their attitudes toward human diversity. The major objective is that students will increase their knowledge and awareness of the experiences of people of oppressed groups, in relation to historical prejudice and discrimination. Students will gain insight in sociohistorical and familial roots of their own biases and increase their ability to sensitively work with individuals and groups who are subjected to oppression, based on race ethnicity, gender, affectional orientation, class, and other stigmatizing characteristics.

**SOCWRK 515 GENERAL METHODS II: LARGER SYSTEMS (MACRO) (3-0-3)(S).** This course considers the many ways and means by which people organize to meet their needs and solve community issues. It develops knowledge and skills for social work practice in organizations and communities and focuses on social change toward the goal of social justice in the structure and functioning of social institutions. Skills include working with task-oriented groups, community networking and coalition-building for political advocacy and for social service program planning, needs assessment, and methods to foster community participation in community development and social action. PREREQ: SOCWRK 503 and SOCWRK 504.

**SOCWRK 521 SOCIAL DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR (3-0-3)(S,SU).** This course explores the impact of social systems on human behavior, in terms of sociopolitical and sociocultural forces, from an ecological systems perspective. Knowledge on the ways in which systems promote or deter the maintaining or achieving of well-being and optimal health is provided. Particular emphasis is given to the effects of prejudice and discrimination on individuals and groups, based on their particular race, ethnicity, gender, affectional orientations, class, or other stigmatizing characteristics. There is a special emphasis on working with the Hispanic/Latino population.

**SOCWRK 525 ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES (3-0-3)(S).** The primary focus of this course is the understanding of children from a developmental perspective within the context of the family and the expanding social environment. In addition to developmental and systems theory, psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive, structural, and current models of family therapy are examined. Understanding of assessment includes consideration of health as well as unhealthy responses and a strengths based perspective is encouraged. Students are expected to address ethical issues in working with families and children.

**SOCWRK 526 MENTAL DISORDERS (3-0-3)(F/S).** This course prepares students to conduct systematic biopsychosocial assessments, formulate differential diagnoses in accordance with the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, and recommend treatment plans informed by the state-of-the-art. Championing the development of robust helping relationships that empower consumers by building on strengths, students are taught to monitor their practice for bias related to affectional orientation, disability, ethnicity, gender and race.

**SOCWRK 530 FOUNDATION RESEARCH I (3-0-3)(F,SU).** This course will distinguish science from other forms of knowledge and introduce students to ethical standards of scientific inquiry with human subjects. Addresses the scientific literature; research questions and hypotheses; measurement and error; qualitative and quantitative research methodologies; descriptive and inferential statistics; and the interpretation of findings. PREREQ: Undergraduate course with content on descriptive and inferential statistics.

**SOCWRK 532 RESEARCH II: EVALUATION (3-0-3)(F).** Research II builds on the knowledge, skills, and values learned in Research I. Students learn the methods and techniques used in social work evaluation research with individuals, families and small groups. A major purpose of the course is to prepare students to participate in research and utilize outcome evaluation of practice in their agency settings. The critical role of outcome evaluation for the profession is emphasized. Students learn the scientific principles of research including conceptualization, operationalization of concepts, measurement, sampling, and analysis of data as they relate to evaluation of outcome. Methods of observation including single subject and group designs are covered. Students are required to complete an evaluation of outcome project including analysis of data utilizing statistical packages such as SPSS or SASS. PREREQ: SOCWRK 530.

**SOCWRK 550 ADVANCED INTERVENTIONS - COMPARATIVE THEORIES (3-0-3)(F).** This course introduces students to the theoretical frameworks used in social work practice to bring about change with individuals, families, and groups. Utilizing a strengths perspective, particular emphasis is placed on individualizing treatment strategies in order to address the needs of diverse, minority, oppressed, and at-risk populations. PREREQ: SOCWRK 503 and SOCWRK 504.

**SOCWRK 570 FIELD WORK (0-20-6)(S).** This internship provides students with a supervised social work practice experience in a community social service agency. It includes experiential learning in foundation social work practice skills as well as opportunities to work with diverse populations. The internship requires 20 clock hours per week in the agency setting. Students are expected to abide by The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers in their practice with clients and agencies. Grade Policy: Students receive a Pass/Fail in the internship. PREREQ: SOCWRK 503.

**SOCWRK 575 ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM I (0-20-6)(F).** This internship provides students with a supervised social work practice experience in a community social service agency. It includes experiential learning in advanced social work practice skills in a specialized setting. Experience with client groups will reflect racial, ethnic, cultural and gender diversity. The internship requires 20 clock hours per week in the agency setting. Students are expected to abide by The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers in their practice with clients and agencies. Grade Policy: Students receive a Pass/Fail in the internship. PREREQ: SOCWRK 503.

**SOCWRK 576 ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICUM II (0-20-6)(S).** This internship provides students with a continued supervised social work practice experience in a community social service agency. It includes experiential learning in advanced social work practice skills in a specialized setting. Experience with client groups will reflect racial, ethnic, cultural and gender diversity. The internship requires 20 clock hours per week in the agency setting. Students are expected to abide by The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers in their

practice with clients and agencies. Grade Policy: Students receive a Pass/Fail in the internship.  
PREREQ: SOCWRK 503.

**SOCWRK 580 SELECTED TOPICS**

**SOCWRK 580 SOCIAL WORK WITH PEOPLE OF COLOR.**

**SOCWRK 581 VIOLENCE IN THE FAMILY.**

**SOCWRK 582 SOCIAL WORK WITH THE ELDERLY.**

**SOCWRK 583 ALCOHOLISM AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE.**

**SOCWRK 584 SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH HISPANIC POPULATIONS.**

**SOCWRK 585 ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE IN ORGANIZATION AND COMMUNITIES.**

**SOCWRK 586 GROUP THERAPY.**

**SOCWRK 587 SOCIAL WORK SUPERVISION.**

**Master of Social Work Full-Time Two Year Program**  
(61 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Course Description	Credit Hours
<b>YEAR ONE</b>		
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 502	History and Philosophy of Social Welfare	3
SOCWRK 503	General Methods I: Small Systems (Micro)	3
SOCWRK 504	Social Work Practice Skills	2
SOCWRK 512	Human Development Through the Life Cycle	3
SOCWRK 514	Ethnicity, Gender and Class	1
SOCWRK 530	Foundation Research I	3
Total Credits		15
<b>Spring Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 505	Social Policy Analysis	3
SOCWRK 515	General Methods II: Larger Systems (Macro)	3
SOCWRK 521	Social Dimensions of Human Behavior	3
SOCWRK 570	Field Practicum	6
Total Credits		15
<b>YEAR TWO</b>		
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 506	Individuals and Families: Policy and Legislation	3
SOCWRK 532	Research II: Evaluation	3
SOCWRK 550	Advanced Interventions-Comparative Theories	3
SOCWRK 575	Advanced Practicum	6
Total Credits		15
<b>Spring Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 525	Advanced Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families	3
SOCWRK 526	Mental Disorders	3
SOCWRK 576	Advanced Practicum II	6
	*2 Electives - 2 Credits Each	4
Total Credits		16
<b>TOTAL TWO YEAR PROGRAM</b>		<b>61</b>

**\*SPECIALIZATION ELECTIVES**

Selected Topics .....2 credits each

(Elective options will vary from year to year, and may include these or other pertinent issues.)

Violence in the Family School Social Work

Substance Abuse Women's Issues

Social Work with People of Color Aids Issues

Social Work with the Elderly Family Therapy

Social Work Supervision Health Issues

Grant Writing/Administration Group Therapy

Rural Social Work Political Social Work

International Social Work

Note: Curriculum Guidelines established by the Council on Social Work Education are available in the School of Social Work office.

**Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Program**  
(38 Credit Hours)

Course Number	Course Description	Credit Hours
<b>YEAR ONE</b>		
<b>Summer Sessionr</b>		
SOCWRK 514	Ethnicity, Gender and Class	1
SOCWRK 521	Social Dimensions of Human Behavior	3
SOCWRK 530	Foundation Research I	3
Total Credits		7
<b>Fall Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 506	Individuals and Families: Policy and Legislation	3
SOCWRK 532	Research II: Evaluation	3
SOCWRK 550	Advanced Interventions-Comparative Theories	3
SOCWRK 575	Advanced Practicum	6
Total Credits		15
<b>YEAR TWO</b>		
<b>Spring Semester</b>		
SOCWRK 525	Advanced Clinical Practice with Individuals and Families	3
SOCWRK 526	Mental Disorders	3
SOCWRK 576	Advanced Practicum II	6
*2 Electives - 2 Credits Each		4
Total Credits		16
<b>TOTAL TWO YEAR PROGRAM</b>		<b>38</b>

**\*SPECIALIZATION ELECTIVES**

Selected Topics .....2 credits each

(Elective options will vary from year to year, and may include these or other pertinent issues.)

Violence in the Family School Social Work

Substance Abuse Women's Issues

Social Work with People of Color Aids Issues

Social Work with the Elderly Family Therapy

Social Work Supervision Health Issues

Grant Writing/Administration Group Therapy

Rural Social Work Political Social Work

International Social Work

Note: Curriculum Guidelines established by the Council on Social Work Education are available in the School of Social Work office.

## **School of Social Work MSW Policies & Procedures**

### **Advising and Advisors**

Graduate students are provided opportunities for mentoring and advising by full-time faculty within the School of Social Work. College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs policy requires that all faculty schedule six hours per week for student advising and mentoring. These hours are posted in a schedule book maintained by the front desk receptionist and in which students may use to sign up for meetings with faculty. New graduate students are randomly assigned to faculty who hold associate or full graduate faculty status at the new student orientation. The advising goal is to meet the individual needs of each student as he/she develop his/her educational and career plans. Faculty advising responsibilities include advising students on satisfactory progress in the program and graduation. Faculty also provide information concerning available student support services (e.g., financial aid and counseling center), career options, and the job market. Faculty must meet with their advisees at least once each semester. Faculty have designated office hours and are required to add additional hours during registration periods so that students can meet with their advisors to discuss their program. As a student becomes familiar with faculty and finds common interests, the student may change faculty advisors. Students are allowed to do so at the end of a semester and after discussion with the MSW Program Coordinator, current faculty advisor, and desired faculty advisor. Graduate students also can consult with the MSW Program Coordinator regarding curriculum, selection of field settings, scheduling, and other academic concerns.

### **New Student Orientation**

All incoming MSW students must attend a new student orientation prior to attending classes. It is during this orientation that student rights and responsibilities are discussed and pertinent policies, procedures, handbooks, and printed materials distributed. These materials serve as the student handbook; students are expected to keep orientation materials for future reference and are encouraged to revisit specific policies and procedures when concerns are raised. A copy of orientation materials are also provided to faculty for their use when advising students. These orientation materials include:

- A current Boise State University Graduate Catalog

- Website information to access current Idaho social work licensure laws and rules

- A current NASW Code of Ethics

- A NASW membership application

- A copy of the Albertson's Library guide for social work students

- Current Boise State University Student Handbook:

- <http://www.boisestate.edu/stuaff/handbook/StudentHandbook.doc>

- Material on the educational requirements of the MSW Program and the MSW Program curriculum

- Boise State Technology Handout

- The OGSSW bylaws

## The upcoming semester class schedule

The new student orientation is a formal meeting of faculty, staff, and students and includes such content as graduate social work education at Boise State University, a discussion of the MSW Program curriculum and practicum, academic policies and procedures, student advising, registration, important deadlines, and general information on moving through the University and School environments

## **Student Involvement**

The School of Social Work provides opportunities for MSW students to organize in their interests as student and it encourages such organization. The School has had a student organization since 1974 for undergraduate students. In 1993, the MSW students developed their own student organization, the Organization of Graduate Student Social Workers (OGSSW). OGSSW is recognized by the University's student governmental body, ASBBSU, and received ASBBSU financial support and in-kind services supporting OGSSW goals. The OGSSW has a constitution and bylaws which are distributed to new students. Every MSW student is a member by virtue of being a social work graduate student; membership is free. The organization meets bi-weekly and has a faculty advisor elected by the membership who serves as an ex-officio member of OGSSW. The membership elects a representative with voting rights to serve on three School committees: the MSW Admissions Committee, the MSW Committee, and the Practicum Committee. The membership also elects a non-voting representative to attend faculty meetings. The Social Work faculty and administration look to OGSSW representatives to provide the student voice when formulating or modifying policies and procedures affecting academic and student affairs. Drafts of policies and procedures are circulated to OGSSW representatives for their input and recommendations. Similarly, the committees that OGSSW representatives sit on represent a forum where issues and concerns of the MSW student body can be taken.

## **Student Academic and Conduct Responsibilities**

Graduate students do have academic and conduct responsibilities while enrolled in the MSW Program. A student may be placed on probation and/or be dismissed from the program when, in the collective judgment of the faculty, the student's behavior or academic problems conflict with the basic standards of professional social work practice or those standards set by the University. A student cannot graduate from the program while on probationary status.

Students have academic responsibilities for their performance in both the classroom and field practicum. A student's conduct should conform at all times to the values and standards of the social work profession as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. The NASW Code of Ethics is used by the School to assess student behavior that is deemed unethical or unprofessional for MSW students. Students who fail to meet acceptable academic performance as set forth in the Graduate Catalog are withdrawn from the program. Students who do not maintain at least a 3.0 GPA re placed on probation for one semester. If grades are not brought up to 3.0 or better the following semester, the student is withdrawn from the program and academically disqualified for any further graduate level work. Students cannot count grades below "C" to meet any requirement of the MSW degree. Students must repeat any course in which they received a final grade of "D" at the course's next offering. If that attempt is unsuccessful, the student is withdrawn from the program. Students who receive the final grade of "F" are automatically

withdrawn from the graduate program and disqualified from further graduate level work. Students who receive a failing grade in the practicum are terminated from the program.

Students who fail to observe the University Code of Conduct may be reprimanded, disciplined, or terminated from the program. The Student's Bill of Rights as set forth in the Boise State University Student Handbook identifies those standards of conduct which govern a student's participation in the academic community. Dismissal is a serious matter; students charged with a grievance under this code of conduct are subject to University judicial procedures described in the University Student and Administrative Handbooks and are entitled through those policies and procedures to due process.

The School has a MSW Program dismissal policy developed by the MSW Committee and approved by the faculty which describes the policy and outlines the procedures for probation and/or dismissal. The imposition of probation or dismissal is a very serious matter and cannot be recommended or imposed in the absence of substantiated reasons. The use of early interventions or remediation actions prior to the initiation of probation or dismissal is supported by the School. These early interventions may include, but not be limited to, counseling referrals, tutorial assistance, or referral to other academic services. Often faculty or students will initiate a request for assistance. Faculty and students are encouraged to use the MSW Program Coordinator as a neutral mediator to resolve complaints or concerns. Every effort is used to resolve concerns or grievances early and at the lowest level possible.

### **MSW Program Dismissal Policy and Procedures**

***Policy:*** Social work is a self-regulating profession, based on knowledge and guided by professional values and ethics exemplified in the current NASW Code of Ethics. Students enrolled in the Master of Social Work Program must demonstrate professional fitness for both study and a career in the profession. A student may be placed on probation and/or be dismissed from the program when, in the collective judgement of the faculty, the student's behavior or academic problems conflict with the basic standards of professional social work practice or those standards set by the University.

***1. Student's Academic Responsibilities.*** Students have academic responsibilities for their performance in both the classroom and field practicum. A student's conduct should conform at all times to the values and standards of the social work profession as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics. Students are expected to be able to establish and maintain positive and constructive interpersonal relationships with faculty, fellow students, and others. This entails, among other things, the ability to deal effectively with conflict and to be assertive in non-hurtful and respectful ways. Due to the professional and human service function of the social work profession, these behaviors are part of the School's academic requirements and standards. The code of conduct set out in the NASW Code of Ethics is used by the profession as a guide for sound professional judgement and conduct and is used by the School of Social Work to assess student behavior that is deemed unethical or unprofessional for MSW students. Students who fail to meet acceptable academic performance as set forth in the Graduate Catalogue will be withdrawn from the program. A graduate student whose grade point average (GPA) falls below 3.0 is placed on academic probation. Any graduate student who earns a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 for two consecutive semesters is withdrawn from the MSW Program and academically disqualified

for any further graduate level work. Additionally, MSW students cannot count grades below C to meet any requirement of the MSW. If a student receives a final grade of D in a required MSW course, s/he may attempt to improve the grade by repeating the course only one time. If that attempt is unsuccessful, the student is withdrawn from the MSW program and academically disqualified from any further graduate level work. The course must be repeated at the next offering or the student waives the right to repeat the course. If a student receives a final grade of F in any required MSW course, the student is withdrawn from the graduate program and academically disqualified from any further graduate level work..

2. ***Student's Conduct Responsibilities.*** Students who fail to observe the University Code of Conduct may be reprimanded, disciplined, or terminated from the Program. The Student's Bill of Rights as set forth in the Boise State University Student Handbook identifies those standards of conduct which govern a student's participation in the academic community. The School of Social Work adheres to the policies and procedures of the University's code of conduct. Students charged with a grievance under this code of conduct are subject to University judicial procedures described in the University Student and Administrative Handbooks, and are entitled through those policies and procedures to due process.

Examples of non-professional conduct which may be grounds for dismissal:

- Resistant Attitude to Learning -- Students who are overly or persistently defensive and/or have difficulty integrating new concepts, or responding constructively to criticism, may be asked to discontinue the program.
- Personality Unsuitable to Social Work -- Every profession is dependent on its practitioners possessing appropriate character attributes. Social work particularly requires the ability to empathize, project warmth, and develop trusting relationships with a wide variety of diverse types of people. The inability to enable others to form close trusting relationships with the social worker and to manage the intense emotional expressions which come from people in need may mean that a different career should be sought.
- Emotional Immaturity or Instability -- While immaturity or instability may not keep someone from performing well in some fields, it may in fact, mean that students are not yet ready to be entrusted with a license to work directly with vulnerable persons. Additionally, the lack of emotional stability or the presence of a mental illness may stand in the way of building relationships, and dealing with confidential material or otherwise jeopardizing client welfare. Therefore, students who display a chronic pattern of emotional immaturity or mental instability may be barred from the program.
- Unprofessional Behavior -- Breaches of the Code of Ethics or seemingly small infractions such as regularly leaving confidential files unlocked may be deemed to be serious enough to terminate from the program. The misuse of clients by involving them in staff conflicts and gossiping about the agency or clients are examples of behaviors which are inconsistent with professional social norms. Failure to comply with the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics will result in dismissal from the program. Any sexual interaction between a student and a client or other serious breach of ethical conduct will result in expulsion from the MSW Program.
- Failure to Disclose or False Reporting -- The failure to disclose pertinent data or giving false information in applying to the Social Work Program or at any step in the

application for specific field placements is grounds for termination from field work and from the MSW program. Anyone who has been convicted of a felony must disclose this information to the Practicum Director. (A felony involving a crime against person(s) may be grounds for exclusion from field work.) In placing students it is important to know if they have been served by the agency they are applying to or if they have had any involvement with staff. Our policy is to avoid placing students at agencies where they have received services in the past. Additionally, we would most likely avoid asking them to provide services with any client group where they still may have some vulnerability or aversion for whatever reason. For example, we would not ask a sexually abused woman to provide services to perpetrators.

3. ***Dissemination.*** Registration at the University implies a student's acceptance of and willingness to abide by the published academic regulations and all other rules found in any official university publication or announcement. Those policies and procedures that govern a student's academic and conduct responsibilities (BSU Student Handbook, BSU Graduate Catalog, MSW Field Work Manual, NASW Code of Ethics, and Program Dismissal Policy) are disseminated to and discussed with all incoming MSW students at new student orientation. Additionally, the standards for professional conduct identified in the NASW Code of Ethics are discussed extensively in the practice sequence courses such as SW 503 and SW 504.
4. ***Early Intervention/remediation.*** A student's progress is monitored by teaching faculty throughout the semester. As a student moves into academic difficulty, the teaching faculty member may consult with the MSW Program Coordinator on possible early intervention or remediation for the student. The Program Coordinator may meet with the student and/or the faculty member to discuss the difficulty and explore options to assist the student. Options that may be suggested to the student may include putting into place such supports as writing center referrals, tutors, and referrals to the University Counseling Center. Student progress in field practicum settings is monitored by the school liaison faculty member. As problems arise, the faculty liaison consults with the Practicum Director and field supervisor regarding corrective or remedial actions. The Practicum Director informs the MSW Program Coordinator of a student's problems and any corrective actions implemented.
5. ***Probation/dismissal.*** The imposition of probation or dismissal is a very serious matter and cannot be recommended or imposed in the absence of substantiated reasons. Any request for the initiation of probation or dismissal against a student requires a formal written allegation of misconduct. The use of early interventions or remediation actions prior to the initiation of probation or dismissal is supported by the School. Faculty and students are encouraged to use the MSW Program Coordinator as a neutral mediator to resolve complaints or concerns. A student cannot graduate from the program while on probationary status.

***Probation/dismissal procedure:***

- a. A complaint or concern regarding a student's misconduct may be filed by a faculty member or a fellow student. The individual bringing the complaint has 20 working days from the occurrence of the alleged misconduct to put the complaint in writing, with any supporting documentation attached, and submit it to the MSW Committee (via the Chair).

- b. The MSW Committee will, within 15 working days, notify the student of the complaint and schedule a meeting to review the allegations. The committee may receive written or oral testimony from interested parties. The student may appear before the Committee to speak on his/her own behalf, ask others to address the Committee on his/her behalf, and/or submit written materials for the Committee's consideration. The Committee will determine the type and quantity of information it will consider.
- c. The MSW Committee has the responsibility to consider the facts and to decide if limitations on the student's enrollment in the program are warranted. If it decides that limitations are warranted, it may recommend to the Director of the School (i) the imposition of a probationary status and set conditions prerequisite to the removal of that status, (ii) the temporary suspension or permanent dismissal of the student from the program, or (iii) the setting of other conditions and limitations related to the student's enrollment which is deemed appropriate. The Committee forwards a written summary of its findings and recommendations to the Director and the student within 5 working days of the meeting.