

# **BSW Student Handbook 2020 - 2024**

## **THE URBAN VOICE**



## **MORGAN STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK (2020-2024)**



**Baccalaureate of Social Work**  
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*"It is the policy of Morgan State University that all employees and students should be able to enjoy and work in an educational environment free from discrimination. Discrimination against any person or group of persons on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or disability is prohibited by this Policy. Any employee, student, student organization, or person privileged to work or study at Morgan State University who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including permanent exclusion from the University."*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The Student Handbook is intended to serve as an adjunct to the Policies and Procedures for the Baccalaureate of Social Work Program. This document is available to all BSW students.

If, after reading this Handbook, further clarification regarding the policies and procedures is desired, consult a Faculty Advisor or the BSW Department Chair. The BSW Department may be reached at (443) 885-3537.

## **II. THE BACCALAUREATE OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM**

### **Historical Overview of Social Work Education at Morgan**

The Social Work Program was formed in 1969 and was known as the Undergraduate Social Welfare Program in the Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts. It was not until 1975 that the program received departmental status, and the name was changed to the Department of Social Work. The change in name and status is a reflection of the recognition that the baccalaureate degree in social work is the first professional degree in this profession. The social work program received approval by the Council on Social Work Education in 1971. In 1975, it became one of the first undergraduate programs in the country to receive accreditation by this body. The department has continued to receive re-accreditation since that time. In 2005 the department reached new growth and expanded to add both a Masters and Ph.D. program. Both programs have adapted the rich tradition of enhancing the knowledge base of future social workers and leaders in America with a specific interest in specializing in urban areas. In 2009, the Department of Social Work became the School of Social Work.

Since the first class earning a B.A. degree graduated in 1971, students completing the undergraduate degree in social work have gone on to distinguished careers in social work and other related disciplines. Social agencies located in the Baltimore-Metropolitan area employ numerous Morgan social work graduates. These agencies include Baltimore City Public Schools, hospitals, psychiatric programs, corrections facilities, child welfare agencies, and agencies that provide services to the elderly. In addition, approximately forty-five percent of the students receiving the bachelor's degree in social work from Morgan go on to graduate studies in social work within two years of receiving the BSW.

### **Program Mission, Goals and Objectives**

Morgan State University is a historically Black institution with the unique designation as Maryland's public urban university. As an urban university, Morgan serves an ethnically and culturally diverse student body made up of traditional college-age as well as part-time and adult learners. The university's curricula are designed to meet the educational needs of city residents and the needs of the city and the state for professionals trained in a variety of areas. A major focus of the curriculum is on the social, economic, and political characteristics of the city so that the capacity to understand urban life and phenomena is a central part of the education of the students. Also, the comprehensiveness of Morgan's programs reflects the commitment of the university to have a major impact on the problem of the underrepresentation of Blacks and other minorities in the professional labor force within the city, state, and nation.

Because of the urban emphasis, a substantial amount of research is focused on urban life and phenomena with a bent toward education, service, and public policy development. The research is oftentimes oriented toward specific urban problems and issues, such as human resources development, economic development, and competitiveness, health care, environment, aging, and substance abuse.

Consistent with the urban mission of the university, the mission of the BSW Social Work Program is to prepare beginning generalist practitioners to practice competently and effectively with urban families, groups, organizations, and communities. The program is committed to the alleviation of human suffering and the improvement of the quality of life for urban residents. Because African Americans make up a substantial percentage of the urban population and are also over-represented among urban residents facing unrelenting social and economic problems, the program has a major focus on preparing its graduates to address, systematically and strategically, issues of poverty and socioeconomic disadvantage, interpersonal and community violence, substance abuse, and mental health problems, social injustice, and discrimination.

### **Program Goals**

The program's overarching goal is to prepare urban social workers whose knowledge, values, ethics, and skills enable them to intervene effectively with distressed African American communities, as well as other communities and populations at risk of negative outcomes and overall wellbeing. The program goals include:

1. To prepare beginning generalist practitioners committed to working competently and effectively with urban families, groups, organizations, and communities;
2. To socialize students to the values and ethics of the profession of social work;
3. To address challenges, issues and problems of the urban environment toward the alleviation of human suffering and enhancing the quality of life of oppressed, at-risk, and vulnerable urban populations;
4. To develop an appreciation for the historical and contemporary contributions of African Americans to the field of social welfare as a context for social work practice;

5. To prepare students with the knowledge, skills, and commitment to address oppression and social injustice in all forms;
6. To promote the fullest understanding of the reality and complexity of human diversity as a basis for culturally competent social work practice.

### **Program Objectives**

The Program's objectives are derived from the program goals and are as follow: Upon completion of the Program, students will:

1. Demonstrate well-grounded knowledge, values, and skills required for generalist social work practice with urban populations;
2. Demonstrate a commitment to the basic values and ethics that guide social work practice, an ability to resolve ethical dilemmas, and the ability to engage in ethical decision making;
3. Demonstrate the capacity to embrace ethnic and racial differences, demonstrate respect for cultural diversity, and demonstrate the capacity for working effectively with diverse client populations;
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the Black perspective in social welfare and a commitment to the promotion of social justice and equality and the elimination of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, ageism, and other forms of oppression;
5. Demonstrate effective oral, written, and technological communication skills in the use of self with diverse clients, colleagues, and community members;
6. Demonstrate the capacity to utilize the ecological perspective as the framework for generalist social work practice.

### **University Policies**

The University has many policies that govern how the institution will handle various student concerns. These policies include but are not limited to, sexual harassment, non-discrimination, disability regulations, and special support services. These policies and others can be found in the University Student Handbook and University Catalog. The University policies which govern grading can also be found in the University Catalog. In addition, the University Counseling Center provides a comprehensive program of support services to assist students in their adjustment to the demands of University life. The Counseling Center provides individual counseling, workshops, and support groups to help students resolve educational and personal concerns. The Counseling Center is located in Room 202 in the Carter-Grant-Wilson building.

### **Admissions**

The Morgan State University BSW Department strives to recruit, admit, develop, and graduate students who will become competent and effective beginning generalist social workers committed to working in the urban environment. The BSW Department seeks students who have a value system that is consistent with that of the social work profession. Upon admission to Morgan State University, students interested in majoring in social work are eligible to take Orientation for Social Work Majors (ORSW 101), Introduction to Social Work (SOWK 200), and Black Families (SOWK 209) in the BSW Department. These courses serve as a way to introduce potential majors to the profession as well as the BSW Department. Faculty members teaching these courses begin to identify students who have the potential for admission into the BSW Program. Students interested in a career in social work may enter the department under the status of "Prospective Social Work Major," which enables the student to be advised and guided through Liberal Arts requirements by a social work faculty member. This further allows the faculty in the BSW Department to acclimate students to the program and profession. Admission to Morgan State University does not, however, automatically ensure admission into the BSW Program.

Students are able to apply for formal admission to the program once they have completed all general education requirements and have taken Introduction to Social Work (SOWK 200) and Black Families (SOWK 209). Students may submit an on-line application for formal admission into the BSW Program in January and August of every year. The requirements for admission apply to incoming freshmen students, transfer students, and current Morgan State University students wishing to pursue a major in social work.

As found in the BSW Student Handbook, the Social Work Admission Requirements and Guidelines/Criteria are:

1. Completion of all General Education Requirements by the end of the semester during which the applicant applies for admission; grades in the General Education courses that are pre-requisite for the core social work courses cannot be lower than a 'C.' These courses include: Psychology (PSYC101); Economics (ECON211); Introduction to Sociology (SOC1101); and Social Statistics (SOCI351 or SOWK 363);
2. Cumulative grade point average of 2.5 or above; once students have been admitted to the BSW Program they must ensure their GPA remains at least 2.5 through graduation;
3. Applicants must have taken and passed with at least a 'C' Introduction to Social Work (SOWK 200) and Black Families (SOWK 209);
4. Applicants are required to complete an admission application packet which includes:
  1. the fully completed application form (*all* sections completed)
  2. a three- page personal autobiographical summary highlighting the following
    - Ø reasons for wanting to become a Social Worker;
    - Ø goals upon graduating;

- Ø previous experience, if any, in any Social Work or related field;
- Ø reason for changing major to Social Work (if applicable)
  - c. a narrative describing the meaning to them of such topics as social and economic justice, diversity, and oppression
  - d. two letters of reference from professional persons who are non-relatives that can support the student's suitability for pursuing a degree in Social Work
  - e. Morgan State University transcript

Several years ago, the BSW Department faculty decided to revise the admissions packet to further enhance our ability to ensure the quality of potential social work majors. Several revisions were made, including the following:

1. Requiring students to write a narrative about the meaning to them of such topics as social and economic justice, diversity, and oppression. This was included as an opportunity for faculty to gain a greater understanding of the student's writing and critical thinking skills. In addition, the content of the narrative provides an opportunity for faculty to see if the student has a basic understanding of the social work profession's commitment to advocacy and service to underserved populations.
2. Requiring students to obtain an evaluation of their performance and behavior from their Introduction to Social Work and Black Families professors as well as from their faculty advisor. Students are evaluated in such areas as attendance, timeliness, interaction with peers, and active participation in advising sessions. This was included as an opportunity for faculty to observe consistency with student performance in class, as well as with their faculty advisor.

### **III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

Social Work students are required to complete an interdisciplinary arrangement, of course, which makes up the liberal arts foundation as a basis for entering the social work curriculum. Many of these courses constitute the General Education Requirements of the University and include Language Arts and Critical Thinking,

Humanities and the Arts, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Mathematics, African and African-American Studies, Biological and Physical Sciences, and Health and Physical Education. In addition, social work majors are required to complete social work support courses.

**Social Work Support Courses:**

PSYC 101	General Psychology
SOCI 101	Introduction to Sociology
ECON 211	Principles of Economics
SOCI 351	Introduction to Social Statistics

**Social Work Requirements:**

SOWK 200	Introduction to Social Work
SOWK 209	Black Families
SOWK 329	Social Welfare and Social Policy
SOWK 331	Human Behavior in the Social Environment I
SOWK 332	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II
SOWK 333	Politics of Social and Economic Justice
SOWK 334	Social Work Practice (Generalist)
SOWK 342	Diversity & Social & Economic Justice
SOWK 423	Social Work/Case Management
SOWK 424	Substance Abuse and Chemical Dependence
SOWK 432	Field Instruction and Laboratory I
SOWK 433	Field Instruction and Laboratory II
SOWK 434	Social Work Practice II
SOWK 435	Social Work Practice III

SOWK 436	Senior Seminar
SOWK 460	Social Work Research
*SSW Electives	School Electives

**Students must consult with their faculty advisor to select courses.** Social Work students must complete General Education Requirements prior to taking Social Work courses with the exception of SOWK 200-Introduction to Social Work and SOWK 209- Black Families. These requirements apply to students entering Morgan for the first time as well as transfer students.

**\*School Electives**

All students completing a major in social work must complete six (6) credits of courses offered in the BSW Department in the School of Social Work. These courses are designed to enhance the student’s knowledge and understanding of urban issues problems and solutions and must be taken at Morgan State University. Students must consult with their faculty advisor to select courses. Courses in the student’s major cannot be used to satisfy the urban core.

**Attendance Policy:** BSW students are expected to attend all class meetings of all courses. Additionally, attendance at the annual Fall and Spring major’s meetings of BSW students is **mandatory**.

**Required Academic Performance:** An overall cumulative average of 2.5 must be maintained. Failure to maintain the required standard of achievement for BSW students will result in the student being placed on provisional admission status. Students must have a 2.5 GPA in order to enter their Field Practicum (Field Instruction and Laboratory I & II). Students must have a GPA to graduate from the BSW Social Work Program at Morgan State University.

**IV. SSW STUDENT REVIEW POLICY & PROCEDURES**

The purpose of Student Review is to identify students who are experiencing challenges that impair their ability to successfully complete the degree program and to assist them in either resolving the problematic issues or exiting the degree program. It is the aim of the student review policy and procedures to identify vulnerable students early in their matriculation in order to provide support

and guidance in a time frame that maximizes opportunities for successful completion of the degree program or avoids the unnecessary expense of funds and time pursuing a degree they are unlikely to obtain given the circumstances. A student review is enacted when initial efforts by faculty or the Office of Field Education to address the situation are unsuccessful in bringing resolution in a timely manner, and the problem escalates.

### **Procedures**

1. Students are referred to Student Review by faculty (adjuncts and full time), field liaisons, administrators, or Field staff. A form will be completed by the referring party indicating the student's name, ID number, and a description of the problem of concern. The completed Form is forward to the respective Department Chair.
2. The following are situations that warrant referral to Student Review:
  - a. Egregious unprofessional or unethical conduct (including plagiarism) or behavior that is otherwise unbecoming of a social worker;
  - b. Academic failure or non-performance in class or field placement; or
  - c. A situation, condition, or problem of a personal nature that appears to be impairing a student's ability to attend class or submit required assignments in a timely manner or otherwise satisfy the requirements of the degree program. This includes health and mental health issues (acute or chronic), employment or family-related issues, etc.; or
  - d. A student who has been dismissed from the degree program as a result of one of the aforementioned issues and wishes to be readmitted to complete the program; or
  - e. Any situation determined necessary for referral by faculty, administrators, and/or field education staff.
3. Upon receipt of completed SRC Form, an ad hoc Student Review Committee is convened by the respective Department Chair in collaboration with the Associate Dean for a hearing with the student to discuss the situation and, if warranted, propose a course of action to address the situation. A written contract detailing the steps to be taken by the student and other relevant parties will be generated and signed by the student, the relevant parties, and the department chair. If appropriate, the contract will identify specific behavior(s) that the student will stop or start to address the problem identified, a way to track the behavior(s),

and a time frame for follow up to determine if the problem has been resolved, and if appropriate, consequences if the problem has not been resolved within the time frame.

### **Remedies and Consequences**

Possible remedies include reducing student's course load/modifying student's program schedule; referring the student to the University counseling center, writing specialist, or other services to assist the student with personal needs; and voluntary leave of absence from the program by the student to allow time to resolve personal issues.

Consequences for unsuccessful fulfillment of contract/corrective action plan may include failure of the course in question, temporary suspension, or expulsion from the Program.

### **Ad Hoc Student Review Committee Composition & Protocol**

An ad hoc Student Review Committee is convened to meet with the student as soon as possible, preferably within 24 hours, after a student is identified. The committee will consist of a committee chair, another faculty member, and a student representative. The composition of the committee will depend on the need of the situation. The student may have her or his advisor present. The committee chair convenes a meeting with the committee and informs the student of the date and time of the review and to be present. Following the review, the committee makes a recommendation to the Department Chair. The Department Chair decides whether to accept, accept with modifications, or disapprove the recommendation. The student has a right to appeal the Department Chair's decision to the Dean. The SSW Dean's decision is binding.

### **Guidelines for Student Review Hearing**

The Committee chair informs the student of the date and time to be present for the review. The committee chair also relates to the student that his/her behavior is problematic and that the purpose of the hearing is to determine if and how the student can correct the behavior with the goal of successfully completing the degree program.

The Committee reviews the unprofessional behavior detailed in the evidence provided (e.g., documentation, correspondence) with the student.

The Student is given the opportunity to respond to the assertions/evidence on his/her own behalf.

The Student is dismissed from the meeting while the Committee deliberates and determines a remedy with the faculty advisor present. The committee recommends a corrective action plan with timelines for remediation of behaviors identified as problematic.

The Student is called back into the hearing session, and Committee shares the corrective action plan with the student. The student can suggest amendments for consideration and further discussion.

The Student and Committee sign the resulting corrective action plan if the student decides to continue in the program. The student's signature indicates the student's intent to follow through with the plan.

The faculty advisor reviews the student's progress on the plan at the end of each semester until the student graduates. If timelines and goals are not met, the faculty advisor notifies the Department Chair, and steps are taken to dismiss the student from the degree program. If instances or severity of problematic behavior(s) escalate(s) prior to the end of the semester, the student can be dismissed prior to the end of the semester.

**Form A**

(To be completed by the person referring the student to SRC)

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

ID number: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of the Problem: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Form B**

Recommendation (circle one):          Remediation          Dismissal

Recommended corrective action plan for \_\_\_\_\_  
(student name)

Behavior 1:

Action 1:

Deadline 1:

Behavior 2:

Action 2:

Deadline 2:

**Signatures**

Student \_\_\_\_\_

Committee \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty Advisor \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, acknowledge receipt of the above referenced information, however, my signature does not necessarily indicate agreement with the content of the document.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Printed name & signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

## V. APPEALS & GRIEVANCE

### DEFINITIONS

1. What is an Appeal?

A student's request for reconsideration of a decision on an issue. This part of the process is handled primarily by the Chair of the Department. Examples of appealable issues:

- Grades
- Dismissal/Termination
- Other adverse action taken

2. What is a Grievance?

An official complaint filed by a student if he/she is dissatisfied with the actions of faculty or staff or other individuals in the School. This part of the process is handled primarily by the Grievance Committee. Examples of possible grievance issues:

- Grades
- Dismissal/Termination
- Problems in field instruction
- Other adverse situations

3. Evidence – These are supporting documents, i.e., graded papers, grade books, contracts, etc. that all parties provide to inform decisions on the issue at hand. A student must come prepared with evidence to support his/her claims. A faculty or staff involved must also be prepared with evidence to support his/her claims.

4. Role of Faculty Advisor – Guide students in what is the process and what is required for an appeal or grievance request, including evidence, communication channels (to understand and follow the chain of command—faculty, advisor, Chair, Dean), timelines, and plan of action. If the person being grieved is the assigned faculty advisor, then the student will be reassigned to a different faculty advisor until the situation has been resolved.

5. Role of Faculty/Staff/Individual involved – He/she will have the opportunity to respond to a grievance against him/her when evidence is requested by the Grievance Committee. Evidence requested by the Grievance Committee should be submitted to the Chair of the Grievance Committee.

6. Role of Grievance Committee – Reviews and makes recommendations on formal complaints initiated by students. The Committee only makes recommendations based on the information provided. Any Plan of Action is the responsibility of the Student with Chair and Advisor.

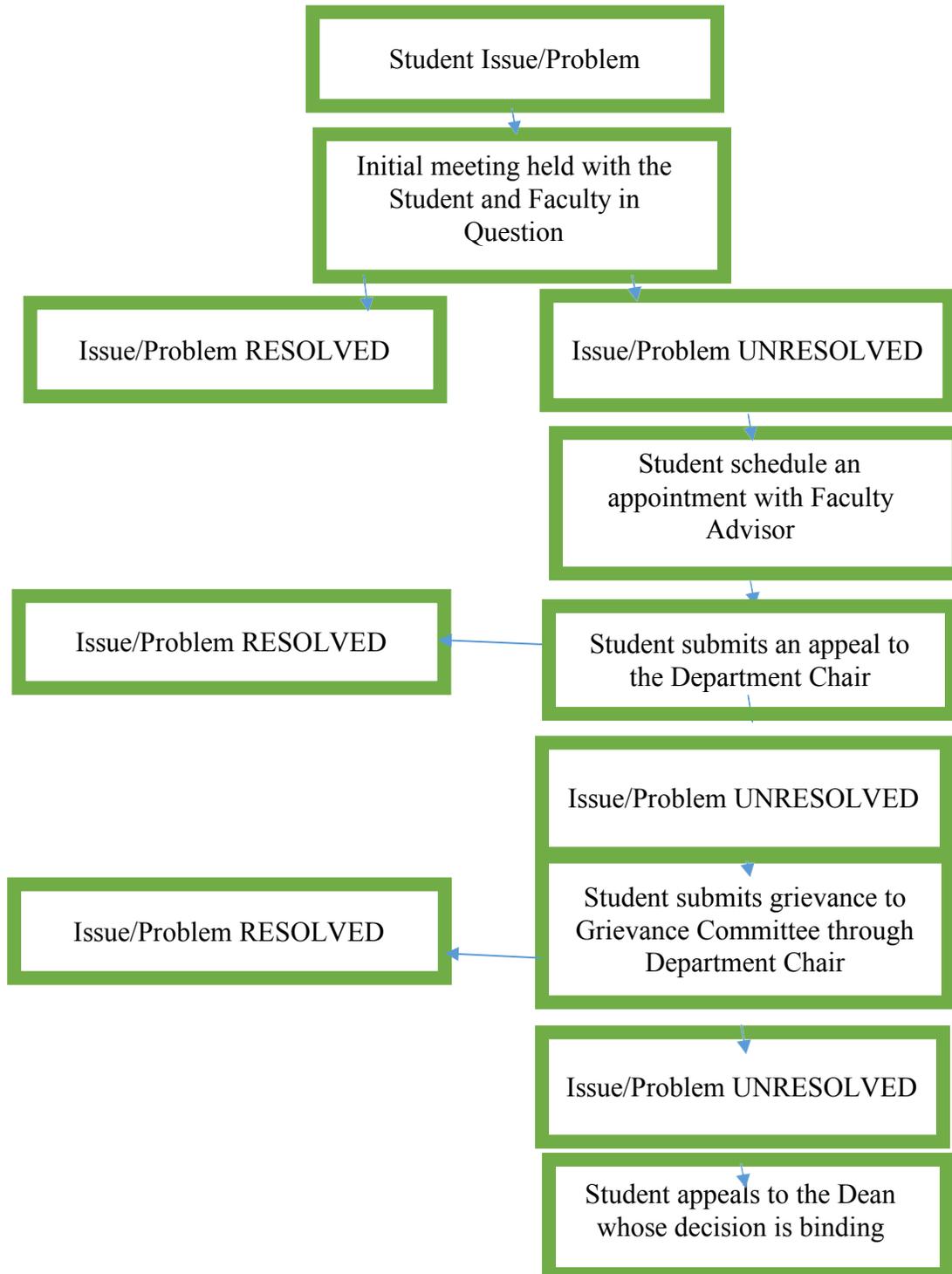
#### **Important Aspects of this Process**

- This policy and processes apply to all appeals and grievances;

- Chain of Command – student begins the process by meeting with the Faculty member involved, then Faculty Advisor, then Department Chair, then Grievance Committee, and finally the Dean;
- Evidence – proper evidence is submitted by all parties (evidence from all involved parties is critical to the integrity of this process);
- Communication – open communication that keeps all involved parties informed but complete confidentiality of information submitted;
- Timeline – follow the set timeline accordingly; timeline applies to appeals and grievances occurring during academic semesters and terms;
- Plan of Action – student, Department Chair, and the advisor will formulate a plan of action based on the decision.
- For Grievance, a decision is made by the Department Chair, and a recommendation is made by the Grievance Committee.

## **CHAIN OF COMMAND**

**Flow Chart A for Chain of Command**



## **EVIDENCE**

Proper evidence must be submitted by all parties involved (e.g., student, faculty in question, field instructor) pertaining to issues applicable to appeals and grievances. Evidence includes supporting documents, e.g., graded papers, grade books, contracts, field hour log, email, voicemail correspondence, etc. that all parties provide to inform decisions on the issue at hand. A student must come prepared with evidence to support his/her claims. A faculty or staff involved must also be prepared with evidence to support his/her claims.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Open communication but complete confidentiality of information submitted is expected of all parties involved. Communication of the decision will be delivered via mail and/or email.

## **PROCESS AND TIMELINES**

### **For Appeals:**

An appeal is a student's request for a reconsideration of a decision on an issue.

1. Prior to an appeal, the student addresses his/her concern with the faculty/staff involved.	A student must request consideration of his/her concern within 15 business days of incident/deadline for grades posted
2. If the concern is not resolved with involved faculty/staff, then the student appeals to the Department Chair (submit appeals form).	A student appeals to the Chair within ten business days of faculty/staff decision
3. If necessary, the Department Chair meets with the student for clarification of concern.	
4. The Department Chair determines if the policy has been violated.	Within 15 business days of appeal submitted by the student
5. If the policy has been violated, the Department Chair will attempt to negotiate a resolution with involved faculty/staff.	
6. If there is no resolution, the Department Chair informs the student of his/her right to grieve and to meet with his/her advisor, who will explain the grievance process.	

### **For Grievance:**

The process of grievance is for egregious/flagrant situations only. A grievance is an official complaint filed by a student if he/she is dissatisfied with the actions of faculty or staff or other individuals in the School.

1. If there is ground for grievance, then the student submits written grievance with proper evidence to the Department Chair (grievance form). The student's advisor provides guidance.	A student submits grievance within ten business days of being informed by the Department Chair
2. The Department Chair submits the written grievance with proper evidence to the Grievance Committee.	Within ten business days of a grievance submitted by a student
3. The Grievance Committee reviews the grievance, conducts appropriate steps, and submits the recommendation to the Department Chair.	Within 15 business days of a grievance submitted by a student
4. The Department Chair makes a decision and informs the student.	Within ten business days of being informed by the Grievance Committee
5. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, then he/she has the right to appeal to the Dean, whose decision is binding.	Within ten business days of being informed by the Department Chair

**The Process for Grievance:**

Once a student submits a Grievance request to the Department Chair, the Department Chair reviews the request and supporting documents for completion, then forwards that request and supporting documents to the Grievance Committee Chair, who informs the Committee members.

1. Committee Chair shares the request and accompanying supporting documents for review by each member of the Committee.
2. Committee Chair schedules time for Grievance Committee to meet, discuss, and deliberate on the request.
3. Committee Chair informs the Person Being Grieved (cc: Department Chair, Faculty Advisor) and requests clarification or additional information if necessary by a deadline.
4. Committee Chair schedules a time for a hearing with the Person Grieving to clarify facts and any new information. The Person Being Grieved may opt to attend or opt-out of this meeting in writing.
5. The Committee will meet again to deliberate and make a recommendation based on the evidence submitted.

If there is insufficient evidence, the Department Chair can conclude that there is insufficient evidence to render a final decision. If new information emerges during the grievance process, the Department Chair may share that new information for the Committee's consideration.

6. Once deliberation is completed, and a recommendation is determined, the Committee submits a report (see template) with the recommendation to the Department Chair.

7. The Committee Chair or a Committee representative submits the written report to the Department Chair with a recommendation included and the basis for the recommendation. All documentation used for the recommendation must be attached. The written report is stored in a place accessible by the Dean and other appropriate individuals if the need occurs.

\*Appeal on the final decision will be considered only under the basis of a policy or procedural violation.

\* Faculty are on break during the Summertime, therefore, appeals and grievance during the Summer term will be heard in the Fall semester.

### **PLAN OF ACTION**

The student, Department Chair, and faculty advisor will formulate a plan of action based on the decision pertaining to the issue at hand.

### **APPEALS**

Overseer of Process: Department Chair

#### **Academic Standing/Grade Appeal Policy**

Due process and fairness are important to the School of Social Work at Morgan State University. The grade appeal process is designed to ensure due process offering the student the opportunity to correct a perceived injustice. It should be utilized only when the student contends that the final course grade assigned by the instructor is arbitrary or capricious. It is not to be used to challenge grades on individual assignments. "Arbitrary or capricious" implies that:

- The student has been assigned a grade on the basis of something other than his or her performance in the course; or
- Standards utilized in the determination of the student's grade are more exacting or demanding than those applied to other students in the course; or
- The grade is based upon standards that are significant, unannounced, and unreasonable departures from those articulated in the course description distributed at the beginning of the course.

The assessment of the quality of the student's academic performance is one of the major responsibilities of university faculty members and is solely and properly their responsibility. A grade appeal is not appropriate when a student simply disagrees with the faculty member's judgment about the quality of the student's work. A student who is uncertain about whether or not a grade should be appealed or who needs additional information about the grade appeals process can contact the Chair of the respective Department.

### **Academic Standing/Grade Appeal Procedures**

Students should first discuss any issues with grades with their instructors. If a resolution has not been reached, then, students may meet with their advisor. At that point, if students choose to do so because an issue has not been resolved, then they may initiate the grade appeal process by submitting the Grade Appeal Form and Supporting Documents to the Chair of the respective Department. Students must verify that he or she has been unsuccessful in reaching a resolution through this appeals process; precisely and specifically state the reasons for the appeal, with supporting documents. The burden of proof is always on the student to prove that a change of grade is an appropriate action in his or her case.

The Department Chair will review the grade appeal and make an informed decision based on the evidence presented by the student and other involved, i.e., faculty. The Chair develops a resolution then sends a letter to the student indicating the decision. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the Student can request a review by the Grievance Committee. The Student must follow the policies and procedures for Grievance (see next section). The Department Chair communicates to the Chair of the Grievance Committee of the request for a Grievance Hearing.

\* Form found in the Appendices or The Grade Appeal Forms are available from Departmental offices.

[Please refer to Morgan State University Catalog/Website for further information on Academic Appeal Process.]

## **GRIEVANCES**

Overseer of Process: Associate Dean  
in partnership with Department Chair

### **Grievance Policy**

Due process and fairness are important to the School of Social Work at Morgan State University. The grievance process is available to any student who feels that he/she has been treated unfairly. A number of resources are available if a student feels he or she has been treated unfairly. Students should first attempt to resolve difficulties informally by bringing concerns directly to the person responsible for the action, or with the student's advisor, or the Department Chair. If the problem cannot be resolved informally, then the student may file a formal grievance.

### **Grievance Procedure**

If informal efforts to resolve the grievance have failed, students must file their written grievance complaint with the Chair of the BSW Department.

- The grievance process begins with a written complaint by a grieving student requesting a formal hearing with the Grievance Committee. The written complaint is a letter precisely and specifically stating the issue(s) at hand and reasons for the grievance, accompanied by supporting documents.
- The student must submit the written complaint to the Chair of the BSW Department, who submits it to the Grievance Committee Chair.

The Grievance Committee is a committee that reviews and makes recommendations on formal complaints initiated by students ranging from grading in academic courses, concerns, or problems in field instruction, to student/faculty relationships. (A Grievance hearing is comprised of Grievance Committee members, a faculty member from the School of Social Work (advocate) which the student may be asked to select (excluding faculty members involved in the complaint) and one student from the grieved student's program (appointed by the Grievance Committee).

Once the formal complaint from the student is received, the BSW Department Chair informs the Associate Dean and Chair of the Grievance Committee, who convenes the Grievance Committee. The BSW Department Chair provides all available documentation submitted by the student and involved parties for review. Additional documents may be requested by the Grievance Committee.

Grievance Committee procedures:

- The Grievance Committee reviews the complaint documents, including supporting evidence.
- The Grievance Committee (faculty & student representative) meets with the grieving student and a faculty of his/her choice (an advocate).
- The Grievance Committee meets with the involved faculty/staff person (upon invitation).
- The Grievance Committee formulates recommendations and forwards recommendations to the involved Department Chair.
- The Department Chair renders a decision and notifies the student of the decision within the set timeline (see the timeline below).
- If the student is not satisfied with the decision, the student may appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work, whose decision is binding.

<p>1. If there is ground for grievance, then the student submits written grievance with proper evidence to the Department Chair (grievance form). The student's advisor provides guidance.</p>	<p>A student submits grievance within ten business days of being informed by the Department Chair</p>
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2. The Department Chair submits the written grievance with proper evidence to the Grievance Committee.	Within ten business days of a grievance submitted by a student
3. The Grievance Committee reviews the grievance, conducts appropriate steps, and submits a recommendation to the Department Chair.	Within 15 business days of a grievance submitted by a student
4. The Department Chair makes a decision and informs the student.	Within ten business days of being informed by the Grievance Committee
5. If the student is not satisfied with the decision, then he/she has the right to appeal to the Dean, whose decision is binding.	Within ten business days of being informed by the Department Chair

### **Termination Policy**

After students have been granted admission to the Social Work Program, they will continue to be governed by all criteria established by the program for admission. Therefore, students will be expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes personal, academic, and professional growth. Students who: a) do not maintain acceptable academic performance; b) violate the University's Code of Conduct; c) exhibit behavior and values contrary to the profession of social work; d) fail to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics; and e) show clear evidence of an inability for professional growth and development due to unresolved personal or emotional problems, may be counseled into alternative career paths or may be terminated from the BSW Program. If the student violates the University's Code of Conduct, sanctions taken by the University take precedence over those of the BSW Department.

Students identified by faculty or Field Instructors as engaging in any of the above actions will be referred to the Student Review Committee for a full review.

A. The faculty who has concerns about the student's suitability for social work meets with the student's academic advisor and attempts to resolve the matter. If a resolution is not found, the advisor forwards a letter to the BSW Department Chairperson describing the specific concerns and requesting a review by the Student Review Committee.

B. The BSW Department Chairperson, in collaboration with the Associate Dean, will convene the Student Review Committee. The student will be notified in writing that he/she is being reviewed by the Student Review Committee and of his/her rights to be heard before the committee. The student will also be informed of the possible actions that may be taken as a result of the hearing process.

C. After deliberation, the Student Review

D. Committee will prepare a written report with a recommendation to the BSW Department Chairperson, which may include: a) continuance into the program under specified conditions; b) counseling into alternative career path; or c) termination from the Social Work Program.

E. The BSW Department Chairperson will review the report and recommendation, make a final decision, and inform the student in writing of the decision. The student will also be informed of his/her right to file an appeal of the decision to the Grievance Committee.

F. If the student chooses to file an appeal, he/she must submit in writing within 15 days of notification of the decision to the BSW Department Chairperson his/her desire to be heard before the Grievance Committee.

G. The BSW Department Chairperson will convene the Grievance Committee and submit all relevant documentation for a full review. After all, parties have been heard; the Grievance Committee will prepare a report with a recommendation and submit to the BSW Department Chairperson.

H. The BSW Department Chairperson will review the findings and report from the Grievance Committee and render a final decision within 15 days. The student will be notified in writing of the decision. If dissatisfied with the decision, the student may appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work whose decision is binding. This policy can be located in the BSW Student Handbook and Field Manual.

**Student Appeal Form  
Morgan State University  
School of Social Work**

Issue appealing	Please check one: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Grades</li><li>● Dismissal/Termination</li><li>● Other _____</li></ul>
Student ID	

Telephone #	
Department BSW/MSW/PhD	
Course #	
Section	
Semester	
Grade Awarded	
Instructor Name	

Objective: (Please clearly state what you want to accomplish)


**Attach SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (evidence that supports your appeal).**

**Student Grievance Form  
Morgan State University  
School of Social Work**

Issue Grieving

- Grades
- Dismissal/Termination
- Problems in field instruction
- Student/faculty relationship
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty/Staff involved in grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Program: BSW MSW PhD \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a letter precisely and specifically indicating the issue of your complaint, rationale for the grievance, and attach any supporting documents.

**Attach SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (evidence that supports your appeal).**

Please indicate if you would like to have a formal meeting with the Grievance Committee.  
*(Check one)*

- Yes, I would like to meet with the Grievance Committee.
- No, I have submitted my documents, and I waive my right to meet.

**Committee Grievance Report and Recommendation**  
**Morgan State University**  
**School of Social Work**

Issue Grieving

- Grades
- Dismissal/Termination
- Problems in field instruction
- Student/faculty relationship
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree Program: BSW \_\_\_\_\_ MSW \_\_\_\_\_ PhD \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Faculty/Staff involved in grievance: \_\_\_\_\_

Please attach a written report clearly indicating the Committee's Recommendation and the Basis for the Recommendation.

Recommendation:

1. Uphold (explain)
2. Overturn (explain)
3. Defer (explain)

Basis for the Recommendation:

Summary of evidence upon which the recommendation is based.

Supporting Documents:

Attach supporting documents, evidence that supports the Committee's recommendation.

## **VI. FIELD EDUCATION**

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF FIELD EDUCATION**

The purpose of Field Education is to help the student integrate the theory and knowledge base of social work learned in the classroom with the practical hands-on experience gained through work in social welfare agencies.

#### **The objectives of field education are for the student:**

1. To gain first-hand knowledge of social welfare policies, programs, and services and the manner in which they impact client systems;
2. To integrate social work theory with social work practice and to apply theoretical knowledge to practice situations;
3. To impact upon a variety of client systems in a way that creates a delicate balance between the values and ethics of the social work profession and the various client systems;
4. To carry out and internalize basic generalist practice as it relates to the profession of social work.

The objective for field education necessitates the placement of students in agencies and settings where they will be provided with well-structured assignments and consistent field instruction. The BSW field curricula state the objectives and describe the content to be learned at the field placement.

Please see the BSW Field Education Manual for further details regarding field education requirements. A copy of the field manual is available in the BSW Department of Social Work office.

### **TERMINATION FROM THE FIELD PRACTICUM**

#### **Guidelines for Termination from the Field Practicum**

The School of Social Work Field Education Program makes concerted efforts to ensure that all student field practicums are appropriate based on their level of matriculation in the program. However, when unexpected events occur that stand to impede student learning, whether it is student-related (e.g., behavior problems, agency-related issues, personnel changes, or agency reorganization), Termination from the field practicum may become necessary. As such, the

following guidelines have been established to address circumstances for termination of students from the field practicum.

**Termination from a field practicum may be initiated by the:**

- Field Agency/Field Instructor
- Office of Field Education/Field Liaison
- Student

**Grounds for Termination**

The Office of Field Education recognizes that circumstances may emerge that require termination of a field practicum. If the Agency Field Instructor and/or Field Liaison has determined with proper documentation that a student is unable to perform in an acceptable manner in the field practicum, then termination may become necessary.

The Field Instructor and Field Liaison are primarily responsible for guiding and monitoring the work of the student in the field practicum. Before a student is terminated from her or his respective field practicum, a meeting must be held with the following:

- Student
- Field Instructor
- Field Liaison
- Faculty Advisor
- Director of Field Education or the Assistant Director of Field Education

**Reasons for Student Termination:**

1. The student makes threats or demonstrates violent behavior in the field practicum and or classroom.
2. The student's work performance is impacted by substance use.
3. The student decides to withdraw from the BSW or MSW program for any reason.
4. The student does not demonstrate readiness for the field practicum due to their inability to meet the field practicum agreement/contract (Learning Contract).
5. The student does not adhere to agency policies and procedures.
6. The student has excessive unexcused absences and/or excessive tardiness.
7. The student does not demonstrate compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics in the field and/or classroom.
8. The student does not successfully complete the required assignments in the field practicum and field seminar.
9. The student does not demonstrate professionalism (the appropriate attitude and behavior) when interacting with the clients, peers, supervisors, agency staff, and faculty and does not correct the problem after counseled.

10. The student leaves his/her respective field practicum without the approval of the Director of Field Education.
11. The student's inappropriate use of social media that places the program in a compromising position.
12. The student fails to inform the Field Office of previous and current felony convictions.

**Procedures for Termination from Field Practicum: (See Flow Chart A)**

1. The Field Instructor or Field Liaison must inform the student of the infraction jeopardizing the placement. Initially, a face to face meeting with the student is held where the infraction is clearly explained, and the student is given an opportunity to defend his/ her actions. In addition, the student will be instructed to review the Field Education Manual on termination and advised to meet with his/her Faculty Advisor.
2. The Field Instructor will contact the Field Liaison and schedule a meeting with the student. The meeting will address the issue(s) pertinent to the situation at hand with the intent to resolve the reason(s) for termination. The following steps will be taken if the situation is not resolved:
  - a. A written corrective action plan must be jointly developed by the Field Instructor and Field Liaison that includes dates by which the student must correct the problem(s). The student is to be included in developing the corrective action plan and understand what is expected and the potential for termination. The final copy must be signed by the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Liaison. It must be submitted to the student (with a copy to the Field Education Director) within ten (10) business days of completion.
  - b. The student will have to meet expectations by the due dates after the corrective action plan has been developed. The signature of the student, Field Instructor, and the Field Liaison is to be included. The student will meet weekly with the Field Instructor to review progress.
  - c. A written updated report is to be completed by the Field Instructor and Liaison within two weeks documenting the student's progress (or lack thereof). Copies are to be given to the student, Field Instructor, Field Liaison. The Field Liaison will provide copies to the Office of Field Education Director.
  - d. If this issue jeopardizes the placement and occurs after mid-semester, the student is subject not to complete the course and may be required to repeat the Field Education course (Seminar and Practicum). The student may not be allowed to enroll in the field practicum course or return to the field agency in the next semester.
  - e. It is expected that the student completes all requirements of the Field Practicum during the semester. Although there may be unique

circumstances that may warrant the student receiving an incomplete grade. (See "Incomplete Grade" below)

3. If the matter cannot be resolved using the process described above, a meeting that includes the Field Liaison, the Field Instructor, the Faculty Advisor, and the student must be held. All written documentation (evaluations, plan of correction, and any other relevant written information, along with a recommendation) will be prepared by the Field Liaison and must be shared with all parties within five (5) business days before the meeting.
4. In the event, the matter cannot be resolved at the above level; the matter will be referred to the Director of Field Education or her designee. The student should present documentation that supports his/her position to the Field Instructor with a copy given to the Field Liaison.
5. Upon the Director's review, he/she may choose to accept or reverse the recommendation of the Field Instructor and the Field Liaison. If the student is not satisfied with the Director's decision, he/she has the right to appeal to the appropriate Chair (BSW or MSW) for reconsideration, who will review and render a decision. If there is no resolution after the Chair's decision, the student has the right to grieve to the Grievance Committee. (See Grievance Policy)

### **Incomplete Grade**

In extenuating circumstances, a student may request consideration for an Incomplete. Exceptional cases suggest that a student has completed the majority of the work satisfactorily, and due to documented illness or other documented emergencies beyond his/her control, he/she has been unable to complete the requirements for the course. The Incomplete must be requested by the student and considered based only on the following criteria:

1. At the time of the student request of an incomplete grade, he or she must have completed at least 75% of the work assignments and be passing with a minimum C grade.
2. It must be evident that the student has adhered to the agency's policies and procedures, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the Learning Agreement Contract. The Field Liaison (faculty on record) will determine if the student can receive an incomplete grade.
3. The student and Field Liaison will develop a written contract to specify all deficiencies with timeframes for completing all outstanding assignments. It is the student's responsibility to complete the assignments within the agreed-upon timeframe. A student cannot begin a subsequent field practicum course until the prerequisite course is successfully completed. Therefore, the student must complete the work and receive a passing grade prior to beginning the subsequent field practicum course in the following semester. Otherwise, the I grade automatically changes to an F grade. An incomplete may impact timely progress towards degree completion.

## **Field Instructor/Agency Termination**

It is the expectation that the Field Agency will be able to meet the Field Agency Affiliation Agreement established between Morgan State University School of Social Work and the Field Agency. If there is a breach in the agreement that cannot be resolved, the field agency practicum can be terminated for the following reasons.

### **Reason for Termination of Field Instructor or Field Agency:**

1. There is a change within the agency such as closure, change with regulations, restructuring of agency personnel, pending strikes, or labor/management disputes.
2. The Field Agency or Field Instructor does not demonstrate a commitment and adherence to the NASW Code Ethics.
3. The Field Instructor is unable to provide the student with appropriate assignments based on the Office of Field Education expectations.
4. The student and Field Instructor experience unresolvable tension that stand[s] to impact student learning outcomes.
5. The personal safety and well-being of the student are compromised, and termination would be in the best interest of the student.
6. Incompatibility in mission, goals and objectives between Field Agency and core social work values and ethics.

## **Student-Initiated Termination of Field Practicum**

It is understood that there are reasons why a student may initiate a request to terminate the field practicum.

### **Reasons for Student Initiated Termination:**

1. The student is unable to meet the field practicum requirements due to personal reasons such as illness, work-related responsibilities, or family emergency.
2. The student has major concerns about the quality of the educational experience provided by the field instructor and or agency. This is determined through consultation with the Field Program.
3. The student decides to change his or her major or withdraw from school.

### **Procedures for Termination:**

1. The student must initially meet with the Field Instructor and Field Liaison to discuss concerns and reasons for requesting to terminate the field placement.

2. If the student concerns are not resolved, the Field Liaison must inform the Assistant Director or Director of the situation. Participants should include the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, Faculty Advisor, and the student.
3. If the student concerns have not been resolved by #2 above, the student should formally submit a letter to the Director of Field Education to explain the reason for wanting to terminate the field placement.
4. The Director of Field Education or her designee will review the request and contact the Field Liaison and agency representative to determine if the student should be placed in another placement and/or decide upon the future status of the student in field education.
5. The student will be contacted by the Director of Field Education within seven (7) business days regarding the outcome of the decision.

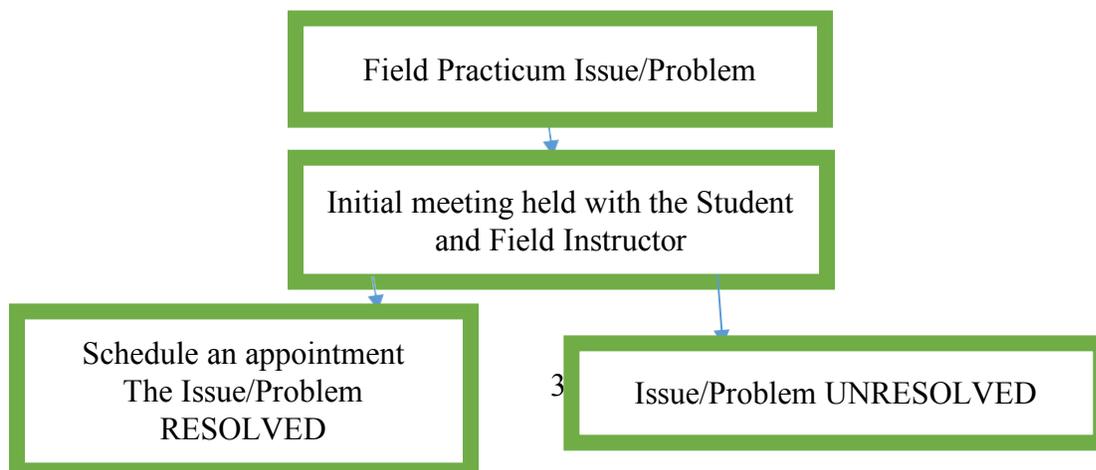
**Potential Outcomes of Termination of Field Practicum:**

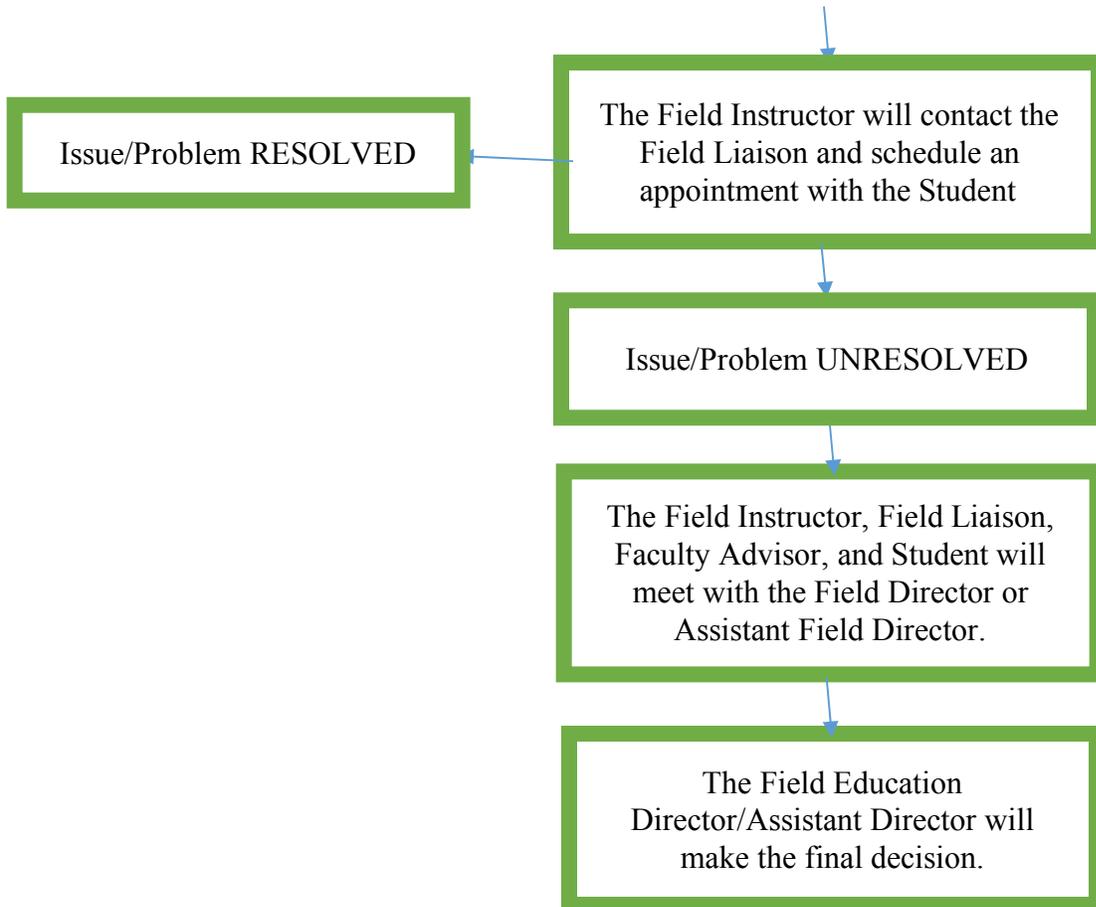
Although there are circumstances where termination from field practicum is necessary, there are consequences. If termination is necessary, the student has a right to a fair and equitable review process. This will include a formal evaluation, documented observations of the student's performance in the field, and seminar settings. Termination may impact timely progress towards degree completion.

**Student Request for Field Practicum Change**

A change in field practicum can only be requested due to circumstances, as noted in the guidelines for termination of field practicum (see page 1). If approved and assigned another practicum, orientation to a new agency is part of the process, which may result in some delays in timely progress towards degree completion.

**Flow Chart A for Resolving Problem in Field Practicum**

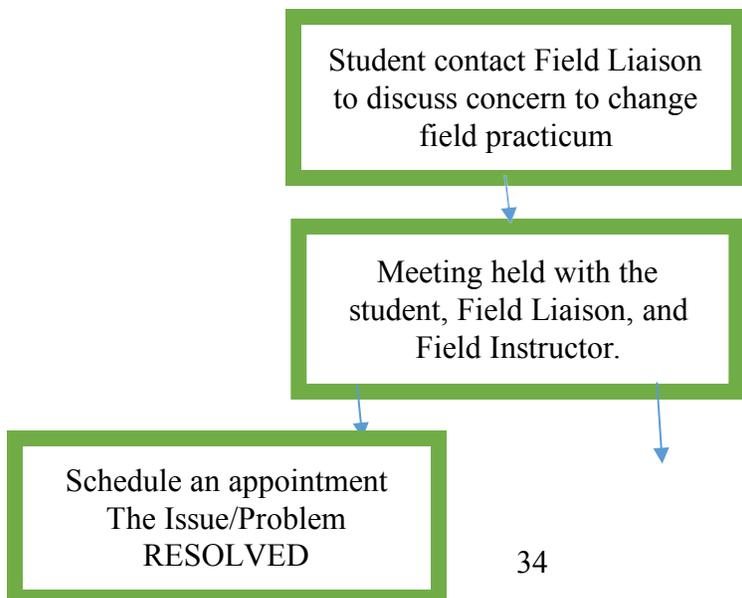


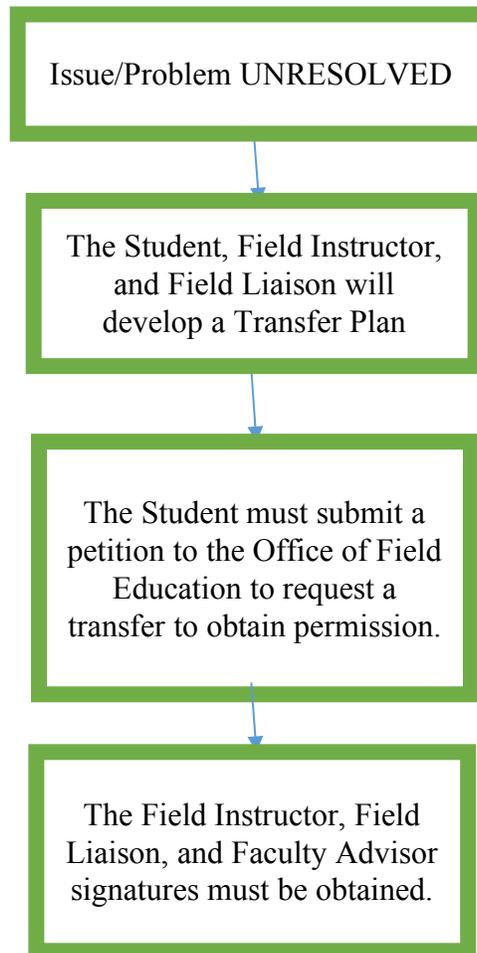


**Procedures for Field Practicum Change: (See Flow Chart B)**

1. The student must contact and discuss the request with his/her Field Liaison and Field Instructor.
2. The Field Instructor and Field Liaison should decide if the concerns shared by the student can be resolved and the field practicum can continue.
3. If it is determined that a change is recommended, the Field Instructor, Field Liaison, and the student must work together to develop a plan for terminating the present field practicum and establish a time frame to transfer to a new practicum.
4. If the above steps have been taken, the student must submit a written request to change the placement to the Director of Field Education or her designee. The written request must be signed by the Field Liaison and the Field Instructor. The form is located in the field education manual and must include a statement from the Faculty Liaison that provides a rationale for the field practicum change, the efforts made to address the concerns.

**Flow Chart B for Student Initiated Field Practicum Change**





### **Criminal Background Check**

For many field practicum sites, a criminal background check is a prerequisite for placement in the respective agency. As such, the student may not be able to begin his/her internship until the results of the criminal background check have been determined. In some instances, the process of completing a criminal background check may take six or more weeks. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the student begin the process immediately when the placement has been approved. Otherwise, there may be a delay in beginning the field practicum, which may result in the inability to successfully complete the field practicum course within the given semester.

Students with a prior conviction(s) must inform the Office of Field Education during the application process for a field practicum. Also, students who are arrested and or convicted while completing their field practicum must inform their Field Liaison and the Director of Field Education or her designee in writing. **Failure to inform the Field Office of previous and current felony convictions may be grounds for termination from field education.**

As part of the interview for the potential field placement, information regarding the required clearances should be discussed between the student and prospective field instructor. The cost associated with the background check should be clarified. Some agencies will cover the fee associated with background checks, and others may require the student to pay the fees as a condition of placement. **The Office of Field Education does not pay for any of the required background clearances.**

Information about **Licensing and Criminal Background** in the State of Maryland are as follows:

Source: Health Occupations Title 19. Social Workers  
<http://dhmh.maryland.gov/bswe/Pages/default.aspx>

19-302.2. Criminal history records check.

- (a) "Central Repository" defined. – In this section, the "Central Repository" means the Criminal Justice Information System Central Repository of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.
- (b) Application. -- As part of an application to the Central Repository for a State and national criminal history records check, an applicant shall submit to the Central Repository:
  - (1) A complete set of legible fingerprints taken on forms approved by the Director of Central Repository and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;
  - (2) The fee authorized under 10-221(b)(7) of the Criminal Procedure Article for access to state criminal history records; and
  - (3) The processing fee required by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for national criminal history records check.
- (c) Central Repository to forward information. – In accordance with 10-201 through 10-228 of the Criminal Procedure Article, the Central Repository shall forward to the Board and to the applicant the criminal history record information of the applicant
- (d) Alternate method where attempts to get legible fingerprints unsuccessful. – IF an applicant has made two or more unsuccessful attempts at securing legible fingerprints, the Board may accept an alternate method of criminal history records check as permitted by the Director of the Central Repository and the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
- (e) Confidentially, use of information. --
  - (1) Information obtained from the Central Repository under this section:
    - (i) Is confidential and may not be re-disseminated; and
    - (ii) May be used only for the licensing purpose authorized by this title
  - (2) In using information obtained from the Central Repository under this section to determine whether to issue a license, the Board shall consider:
    - (i) The age at which the crime was committed;

- (ii) The circumstances surrounding the crime;
  - (iii) The length of time that has passed since the crime was committed;
  - (iv) Subsequent work history;
  - (v) Employment and character references; and
  - (vi) Other evidence that demonstrates whether the applicant poses a threat to public health and safety.
- (f) Contesting information. -- The subject of a criminal history records check under this section may contest the contents of the printed statement issued by the Central Repository as provided in 10-223 of the Criminal Procedure Article.

### **Drug Tests**

It is a common practice for many field agencies to require a drug test as a condition for placement in the respective agency. In addition, random drug testing may also be part of the agency policy, which may be required of students throughout their internship.

### **Child Abuse and Neglect Clearance**

Students seeking field practicum in agencies where they will work with children may be required to obtain a Child Protective Services Background Clearance. Each state maintains a database to determine if individuals who seek to provide services to children have any prior history of child maltreatment that stands to impact their ability to provide services or provide care for children. As a condition of placement, an agency may require a Child Protective Services Background Search. The field agency will be responsible for providing prospective students with information on this matter.

### **Verification of Health Records**

As a condition of placement, the student may be required to submit her or his health records. It is the responsibility of the student to provide verification of health records required by the agency that may include proof of immunization and/or a TB test. The Office of Field Education and Morgan State University are not responsible for providing this information to the field agency.

## **VII. STUDENT ADVISEMENT**

Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon entry into the program. Students should meet with their advisor at least once a semester. Failure to meet with the advisor could jeopardize admissions into the program, field placement, and graduation. Students are also strongly encouraged to read this handbook in its entirety in order to ensure a full understanding of the policies and procedures of the department.

The primary responsibilities of the advisor are as follows:

1. To assist students in assessing their aptitude and suitability for a career in social work practice;
2. To provide students with specific information about courses and BSW Program requirements;
3. To advise on course planning in relation to the BSW Program course requirements and the student's educational needs;
4. To consult with students as they plan their field practice area;
5. To assist students in evaluating their progress and performance in the BSW Program;
6. To advise students who experience class and field performance difficulties or other issues related to their professional education, and
7. To serve as mentors to students as they enter the profession of social work.

The primary responsibilities of the student/advisee are as follows:

1. To review handbook;
2. To schedule and attend advisement for registration;
3. To be aware of registration deadlines
4. To schedule appointments with advisor per email and come prepared with specific questions and issues that need to be addressed at least twice per academic year (before fall and spring semester)
5. To discuss concerns related to academic requirements, performance, and difficulties, and
6. To explore professional goals.

**Registration:** At the time of registration for each semester, the student must secure the advisor's approval for the courses to be taken. The sequence of and prerequisites for the courses are checked by the advisor each semester in order to make certain that the student is matriculating in the BSW Program correctly.

**Meeting with Advisor:** At least twice during the academic year, the student is **required** to meet with the advisor.

## **VIII. TRANSFER STUDENTS**

Morgan State University welcomes applications from transfer students from community colleges, four-year colleges and universities accredited by Maryland and/or a regional accrediting association. Students are expected to have a cumulative average of 2.0 from all colleges attended and be "in good standing" academically and financially at the last institution attended. In all cases, the transfer student must earn the last 30 credit hours toward the desired degree at Morgan State University as a full-time or part-time student. Applications from transfer students with A.A. and A.A.S. degrees earned at Maryland community colleges will be evaluated as determined by the Maryland Student Transfer Policy.

The Transfer Evaluation Center evaluates all transfer credits for general requirements. The student's transcript and transfer credit evaluation form is then forwarded to the Chair of the BSW Department. The Chair evaluates those courses that apply towards the major requirements. Upon completion, the Transfer Credit Evaluation Form is transcribed to the student's permanent record.

Transfer students interested in becoming a social work major must complete the same program admission procedures as other students.

Students admitted into the social work program that transfer from another major within the University must complete the curriculum plan that is in effect at the time of admission to social work, which may differ from the curriculum plan in the catalog under which the student entered the University.

There is a seven-year statute of limitations on social work foundation courses. Social Work Practice courses and Field Education courses must be completed at Morgan State University.

In accordance with the policy of Morgan State University, the BSW Program does not give credit for life experience.

## **IX. STUDENT SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATION**

The Social Work Student Organization is an official University organization. The primary purposes of the organization are: to socialize students to the Social Work profession; to provide students with participation in departmental decision making and governance; to provide students with an opportunity to engage in community service, and to serve as a mechanism in which knowledge of the social work profession can be generated and transmitted.

The Social Work Student Organization has been an integral component of social work education since the program was formed in 1969. Membership in the Social Work Student Organization is open to all social work majors. The student organization has held conferences, seminars, and workshops that addressed major societal and local issues. Issues such as race relations, human relations, HIV/Aids, substance abuse, poverty, and homelessness have been addressed by the student organization through planned change efforts. The organization has also held forums on topics such as career development, applying to graduate school, and successful planning for entering the field practicum. In addition, the student organization has participated in activities planned by other social work professional organizations, including the National Association of Social Work and the National Association of Black Social Workers.

One of the most crucial functions the Social Work Student Organization performs is the assignment of students to key School committees. Through the student organization, students are able to gain representation to departmental committees such as the curriculum, recruitment, admissions and retention, and grievance committees. Students are also assigned to ad hoc committees developed by the student organization.

## **X. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Over the years, social work students have had excellent opportunities to augment instruction received in the classroom through community projects organized by faculty and on their own. Students have received valuable experience in such arenas as after school programs, youth residential programs, substance abuse programs, and domestic violence centers. Students have not only recognized the need for helping in their own communities but in other parts of the country. Social Work students were actively involved in the Katrina on the Ground relief efforts by assisting in an array of activities. Many actually went to New Orleans to provide “hands-on” help while other organized efforts to raise money and “adopt- a- family” campaigns. Students are encouraged to seek out efforts to participate in community service activities not only to enhance their overall education but to begin the life-long commitment to volunteerism and service to communities of which they are a part.

## **XI. PROGRAM EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

After students have been granted admission to the BSW Social Work Program, they will continue to be governed by a review of the Admissions and Retention Committee. Therefore, students will

be expected to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes personal, academic, and professional growth. Students who: a) do not maintain acceptable academic performance; b) violate the University's Code of Conduct; c) exhibit behavior and values contrary to the profession of social work; d) fail to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics or; e.) show clear evidence of an inability for professional growth and development due to unresolved personal or emotional problems, may be counseled into alternative career paths or may be terminated from the Social Work Program. If the student violates the University's Code of Conduct, sanctions taken by the University take precedence over those of the School of Social Work.

Students identified by faculty or field instructors as engaging in any of the above actions will be referred to the Admissions and Retention Committee for a full review. The procedure is as follows:

- 1) The faculty who has concerns about the student's suitability for social work meets with the student's academic advisor and attempts to resolve the matter. If a resolution is not found, the advisor forwards a letter to the BSW Department Chair describing the specific concerns and requesting a review by the Admissions and Retention Committee.
- 2) The BSW Department Chair will convene the Admissions and Retention Committee. The student will be notified in writing that they are being reviewed by the Admissions and Retention Committee and of their rights to be heard before the committee. The student will also be informed of the possible action that may be taken as a result of the hearing process.
- 3) After deliberation, the Admissions and Retention Committee will prepare a written report with a recommendation to the BSW Department Chair, which may include: a) continuance in the program under specified conditions; b) counseling into alternative career path; c) termination from the BSW Social Work Program.
- 4) The BSW Department Chair will review the report and recommendation, make a final decision, and inform the student in writing of the decision.
- 5) If the student chooses to file an appeal, he/she must submit in writing within 15 days of notification of the decision to the BSW Department Chair their desire to be heard before the Grievance Committee.
- 6) The BSW Department Chair will submit all relevant documentation for a full review to the Grievance Committee. After all parties have been heard, the Grievance Committee will submit a report with a recommendation to the BSW Department Chair.
- 7) The BSW Department Chair will review the findings and report from the Grievance Committee and render a final decision. The student will be notified in writing of the decision. If the student continues to be dissatisfied, he/she may appeal to the Dean of the School of Social Work, who will render a binding decision.

## **XII. ALUMNI**

Social work students have the unique opportunity to enter an already formed network of social work practitioners and educators, social work alumni. Those who have graduated in social work from Morgan routinely stay in touch to connect students to learning opportunities, employment, and field instruction sites. The alumni, though not yet formalized as a group, are crucial to the learning process that takes place at Morgan. These individuals routinely lecture on courses focusing on relevant practice issues and techniques. It is largely through this group that students learn the intricacies of various social work settings. Over the past several years, alumni have volunteered their time and resources to assist current social work students for successful entry into the profession.

## **XIII. AFTERWORD**

As stated in the introduction, the School of Social Work is committed to advancing the urban mission of Morgan State University as the state of Maryland's only designated Urban University, to provide a quality public education for the citizens of Maryland through exemplary teaching, research, and service. The School of Social Work provides a professional social work education program that prepares undergraduate and graduate students for social work practice and doctoral level graduate students for social work research and academia.

The educational mission of the School is accomplished by faculty committed to the use of pedagogy that supports critical thinking and life-long learning. The School's research mission embraces interdisciplinary collaboration and scholarship that seeks to increase knowledge for the benefit of individuals, families, organizations, and communities. Community outreach services are rendered by faculty, staff, and students who seek to enhance the quality of life for people and human systems in urban environments, with particular concern for improving living conditions and greater social justice for vulnerable populations.

## **XIV. APPENDICES**

1. Student Data Form \*
2. Social Work Application \*
3. Curriculum Sequence Form \*
4. Application for Field Practicum \*
5. National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics (NASW)
6. National Association of Black Social Work Code of Ethics (NABSW)
7. Policy on Sexual Harassment

8. Policy on Students with Disabilities
9. Admissions Process
10. Grievance Policy and Procedures
11. Termination Policy

**\*Please visit the BSW Department in Jenkins Building, Room 334, for the  
aforementioned Forms.**

## **Code of Ethics**

*of the National Association of Social Workers*

**Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly**

### **Preamble**

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to and address problems in living. Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

### **Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics**

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. \* In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

\*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

The *Code* offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the *Code* must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the *Code*'s values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional. Further, the *NASW Code of Ethics* does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards

should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this *Code* that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this *Code*. In addition to this *Code*, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics, social workers should consider the *NASW Code of Ethics* as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this *Code*. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this *Code* does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the *Code* would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social

workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The *NASW Code of Ethics* reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

### **Ethical Principles**

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire. **Value:** *Service*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

**Value:** *Social Justice*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people. **Value:** *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.* Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

**Value:** *Importance of Human Relationships*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

**Value:** *Integrity*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

**Value:** *Competence*

**Ethical Principle:** *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

### **Ethical Standards**

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

#### **1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients**

##### **1.01 Commitment to Clients**

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

##### **1.02 Self-Determination**

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may

limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

### **1.03 Informed Consent**

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

### **1.04 Competence**

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience. (b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take

responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

#### **1.05 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity**

- (a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.
- (c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

#### **1.06 Conflicts of Interest**

- (a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.
- (b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)
- (d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

#### **1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality**

- (a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to

providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client. (c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants. (j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the

court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death. (p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

#### **1.08 Access to Records**

(a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

#### **1.09 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

#### **1.10 Physical Contact**

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

#### **1.11 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

#### **1.12 Derogatory Language**

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

#### **1.13 Payment for Services**

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.

(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and

inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

#### **1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity**

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

#### **1.15 Interruption of Services**

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

#### **1.16 Termination of Services**

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

(d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.

(e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.

(f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

## **2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues**

### **2.01 Respect**

(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability. (c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

### **2.02 Confidentiality**

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

### **2.03 Interdisciplinary Collaboration**

(a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.

(b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

### **2.04 Disputes Involving Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests. (b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

### **2.05 Consultation**

(a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.

(b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.

(c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

### **2.06 Referral for Services**

(a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.

(b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.

(c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

### **2.07 Sexual Relationships**

(a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.

(b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

### **2.08 Sexual Harassment**

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

### **2.09 Impairment of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

### **2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.

(b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

### **2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues**

(a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.

(c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.

(d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an NASW committee on inquiry, or other professional ethics committees).

(e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

## **3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings**

### **3.01 Supervision and Consultation**

(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

(b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee. (d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

### **3.02 Education and Training**

(a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

### **3.03 Performance Evaluation**

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

### **3.04 Client Records**

(a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

### **3.05 Billing**

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

### **3.06 Client Transfer**

(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

### **3.07 Administration**

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.

(b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and consistently applied principles. (c) Social workers who are administrators should

take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

### **3.08 Continuing Education and Staff Development**

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

### **3.09 Commitments to Employers**

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

### **3.10 Labor-Management Disputes**

(a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions. (b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their

possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action. **4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals**

#### **4.01 Competence**

- (a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.
- (b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.
- (c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

#### **4.02 Discrimination**

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

#### **4.03 Private Conduct**

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

#### **4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception**

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

#### **4.05 Impairment**

- (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.
- (b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

#### **4.06 Misrepresentation**

- (a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.
- (b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized

positions of the organizations. (c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

#### **4.07 Solicitations**

(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

#### **4.08 Acknowledging Credit**

(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

### **5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession**

#### **5.01 Integrity of the Profession**

(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

#### **5.02 Evaluation and Research**

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

- (b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.
- (c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.
- (d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.
- (e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- (f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- (g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.
- (h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- (i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- (j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- (k) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.
- (l) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.
- (m) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.

- (n) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.
- (o) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- (p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

## **6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society**

### **6.01 Social Welfare**

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

### **6.02 Public Participation**

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

### **6.03 Public Emergencies**

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

### **6.04 Social and Political Action**

- (a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.
- (b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.
- (c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.
- (d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.