

Student Handbook & Practicum Education Policy Manual

Master of Social Work Program

California State University, Northridge

2026 – 2027

Department of Social Work

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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I. PREFACE

This manual is intended to cover the academic year as noted on the front cover. Updates and/or changes to this manual will be communicated to students as necessary via email. Core requirements will remain consistent throughout your designated program; however, schedules, curriculum, and some policies and procedures may be adapted.

II. GENERAL INFORMATION

Welcome

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at California State University, Northridge in the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. I am delighted that you chose to further your education here and encourage you to make the most out of your time in this program. You will be invited to learn and struggle with many new ideas and ethical dilemmas in your courses and practicum placements, and your faculty are here to support you throughout your journey.

The information provided in this Student Handbook and Practicum Manual will answer many of your questions regarding the program and its structure. Please use this document, along with the [University Catalog](#) (website), to guide you through your time in the program. The Student Handbook and Practicum Manual tells you more about faculty, instructors, and staff support people, and details policies and procedures related to curriculum, grades, professional expectations, and practicum placements. Helpful resources as you matriculate include this document, the [department website](#), the [Graduate Studies Student Handbook \(website\)](#), your faculty, and peers who will soon become colleagues.

You will have many opportunities to learn and grow with consistent practice, accountability, and critical self-reflection as you prepare to become a professional social worker. You will get out of your program what you put into it, and we look forward to creating collaborative teaching and learning experiences with you.

Dr. Wendy Ashley, Chair, Department of Social Work

MSW Program Advisory Board

The MSW Program Advisory Board serves as the official bridge between the Department of Social Work and the community. The Board advises the faculty on issues relevant to the Community/University relationship and serves to support the Department in a variety of ways. They discuss the nature of practicum instruction and the relationship between class and practicum. They participate in fundraising efforts and represent the Department at events at the University and in the community. The Chair of the Department and SWS President are the links between the Board, faculty, and student body.

Faculty and Staff

Full-Time Faculty & Grants/Contracts Staff (refer to the [MSW website for bios](#)):

Wendy Ashley, Psy.D., LCSW, MSW

Tiffani Brooks, MSW, LCSW

Jodi Constantine Brown, Ph.D., MSW

Luis O. Curiel, D.S.W., MSW, LCSW

Judith A DeBonis, Ph.D., MSW

Julie Gould, MSW, LCSW

Allen Lipscomb, Psy.D., MSW, LCSW

Susan M. Love, Ph.D., MA, MSW

Katie Mortimer, MSW, LCSW

José Miguel Paez, Ed.D., LCSW

Hyun-Sun Park, Ph.D., MSW

Jose Ramos, Jr., MSW

Robin Sims, MSW

Zayda Sorrell-Medina, Ph.D., MSW

Jolene Swain, ACBSW, MSW

Darlene Woo, MSW

Nidia Hernandez, Ph.D., LCSW, MSW, MPA

Eli Bartle, Ph.D., MSW (Emeritus Faculty)

Jean E. Daniels, DSW, MSW (Founder & Emeritus Faculty)

Herman L. DeBose, Ph.D., MSW (Emeritus Faculty)

James T. Decker, Ph.D., LCSW (Emeritus Faculty)

- Part-time Lecturers and Practicum Liaisons: [Refer to the Social Work website for current list \(website\).](#)
- Administrative Staff: [Refer to our website for current list \(website\).](#)

III. OUR MISSION, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES

Department of Social Work Mission Statement and Program Goals

The mission of the California State University, Department of Social Work is to prepare professional social workers to be anti-oppressive, socially just agents of change by promoting well-being in urban settings. As an advanced generalist program with a focus on urban communities, the Department will teach and create collaborative learning experiences with students.

Focus

Urban settings describe communities with densely populated areas and a vast array of subcultures. Utilizing a lens that espouses an anti-racist, intersectional, trauma-informed, collaborative perspective, the Department celebrates a strengths-based inclusive identity, emphasized by the shared experiences of community, culture, and location.

Goals

We will:

- Examine and apply an intersectionality, power, and privilege lens to address social, political, and systemic change.
- Empower and be relevant to the diverse needs of the multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural San Fernando Valley and its surrounding communities.
- Advocate for an equitable and socially just society.
- Enhance critical consciousness through research, practice, and trauma-informed knowledge, values, and skills.

Student Competencies

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally Source: [CSWE EPAS \(website\).](#)

The Council on Social Work Education requires nine Competencies:

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Competency 1. | Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior |
| Competency 2. | Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice |
| Competency 3. | Engage Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice |
| Competency 4. | Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice |
| Competency 5. | Engage in Policy Practice |
| Competency 6. | Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities |

Competency 7.	Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 8.	Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
Competency 9	Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Strengths-Based Framework of the CSUN MSW Program

The MSW Program is committed to promoting the well-being of individuals, families, and communities in the urban setting. The Program's mission and goals are grounded in the strengths-based framework and incorporate seven theoretical perspectives and practices. The following seven knowledge bases provided the foundation for the development of our strengths-based framework:

- Social justice perspective
- Ecosystems perspective
- Social constructionism perspective
- Biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual theories of development
- Community development practice
- Empowerment-based practice
- Value and multicultural competent practice

Overview of Knowledge Bases

- **Social justice perspective:** Social justice is increasingly described as the organizing value of social work (Swenson, 1999). Van Soest (1995) noted three components of social justice: legal justice (what one owes society), commutative justice (what people owe each other), and distributive justice (what society owes the individual). A commitment to human rights and social justice provides the moral grounding for social work practice and research. These concepts reflect our belief that all people should fully participate in the "culture's construction of the good and the real" (Gergen, 1994, p. 180). They direct social work resources and activities toward people who are oppressed and marginalized. Since respect for basic human rights provides the necessary conditions for a just society, freedom and well-being are the starting points and ultimate criteria by which we judge the value of social work practice and research. Social workers contribute to a just society by helping to create the structural arrangements and social processes in which these fundamental rights are honored, and resources are obtained and distributed in an equitable manner. Theorists and practitioners have increasingly addressed the role of social justice and human rights in social work practice and social work education over the last two decades - such consideration is invigorating and imperative for a profession whose goal is to ensure that economic and social resources are available on an equal basis to all citizens. The valuing of social justice and human rights and the implications of that valuing for the profession underlies the MSW Program at California State University, Northridge and its efforts to enlighten and empower social workers to be active change agents on behalf of those who face adversity or are oppressed. Knowledge and skills related to social justice are fundamental to the curriculum, as is indicated in the course syllabi.

- **Ecosystems perspective:** The conceptual framework of ecosystems perspective “provides a way to comprehend human diversity and explicates the relationship between humans and their environment” (Miley, O’Melia & DeBois, 2010, p. 41). This perspective borrows from two bodies of work: Human Systems and Ecology. Human Systems argues that humans form groups that can be distinguished by their unique way of interacting with each other. Human systems are defined by shared meaning, characteristics and/ or structural arrangements e.g. boundaries and hierarchy. Furthermore, all human systems are part of a larger system, the system’s environment, and may have subsystems (e.g. siblings in a family system). Moreover, membership in social systems influences perceptions, interactions with others, and access to power and resources. Individuals act on and respond to their human systems. “The effects are mutual” (Miley et al., p. 31).
- **Social constructionism perspective:** Social constructionism argues “each of us selectively attends to, interprets and acts on our beliefs about ourselves and the world around us” (Miley et al., p. 28). Furthermore, practicing social workers do not help individuals, families or communities find answers to human problems, but construct solutions (DeJong & Berg, 2001). It shifts the focus from a pathology perspective to a strengths-based, arguing that all humans have the capacity for positive change; change is occurring all the time; small change is generative; cooperation is inevitable; people are resourceful; and that meaning and experience are interactionally constructed (Walter & Peller, 1992).
- **Biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual theories of development:** Integrating biological-social-cultural-psychological-spiritual theories of human development in the MSW curriculum, enhances students’ insights and knowledge about the human condition. Cicchetti (2010) argues that the emotional/social and behavioral health of human beings are the outcomes of accumulative adaptations to risks and protective factors in a social context. Our program will educate students to identify risks and protective factors, resiliencies and vulnerabilities in human systems and their interactions in promoting or thwarting human development. The focus will not only include individuals and families living in an urban context, but the human systems they interact with (e.g. public policies on childcare). Students will get a foundation in human behavior in the social environment in the first year and a more in-depth understanding of how to apply this knowledge in the advanced year.
- **Community development practice:** A strengths-based perspective views communities as critical human associations. These associations are based on ties of kinship, relationship, and shared experiences in which individuals voluntarily attempt to provide meaning in their lives, meet individual needs, and accomplish personal goals (Brueggeman, 1996). Communities are social systems that may take on various forms, including religious institutions, ethnic and cultural organizations, neighborhoods, and kinship networks. Social workers grounded in a strengths-based approach are cognizant of the interrelatedness of clients’ well-being and the conditions in and of the larger community. This theory base helps social workers understand behavior in context and illustrates how systems have an impact on individual social functioning. Strengths based practice stresses that social workers must be involved in strategies aimed at changing the social

environments of clients. These strategies include advocacy, empowerment, policy development, and change implementation.

- **Empowerment-based practice:** The strengths perspective has become the principal orientation of much of social work practice over the last decade and provides a thematic direction for the development of our practice approach. Among its most articulate proponents, Dennis Saleebey (2006) states that:

Practicing from a strength's orientation means this – everything you do as a social worker will be predicated, in some way, on helping to discover and embellish, explore and exploit clients' strengths and resources in the service of assisting them to achieve their goals, realize their dreams, and shed the irons of their own inhibitions and misgivings, and society's domination (p. 1).

- **Value and multicultural competent practice:** Developing a strengths-based approach must include knowledge of culturally competent practice. Intercultural understanding has been a mainstay in social work in its efforts to address the needs of all client systems in sensitive and relevant ways. Recent literature has suggested difficulties the concept of cultural competence (Dean, 2001, Dyche & Zayas, 2001; Poole, 1998) and other language has been offered that may be more specific to our goals, such as culturally congruent or culturally relevant practice. Embracing the need to give voice to marginalized communities, the California State University, Northridge MSW curriculum addresses ways for students to learn and practice working with diverse groups of clients that best enable members of those communities to achieve their goals. Diversity may include the above philosophy defines the conceptual parameters and commitments of the program. It articulates the assumptions that grounds our curriculum and outlines our vision of professional social work.

IV. GENERALIST CURRICULUM

Generalist Design

Course	Course Title	Units
SWRK 501	Human Behavior and Social Environment I	3
SWRK 502	Human Behavior and Social Environment II	3
SWRK 503	Psychosocial Assessment and Diagnostic Formulation	3
SWRK 510	Generalist Social Work Theory & Practice I	3
SWRK 520	Social Work Practice in Multicultural Contexts	3
SWRK 521	Generalist Social Work Theory & Practice II	3
SWRK 522/522P	Generalist Practicum Education I and Placement	3
SWRK 523/523P	Generalist Practicum Education II and Placement (may be taken twice for credit)	3
SWRK 525	Social Welfare Policy and Services	3
SWRK 535	Social Work Research Methods I	3

Generalist Courses

For course descriptions, please see the [MSW section in the CSUN Course Catalog \(website\)](#).

V. ADVANCED GENERALIST (SPECIALIZED) CURRICULUM

Advanced Generalist Design

Course	Course Title	Units
SWRK 601	Advanced Social Work Practice with Urban Families I	3
SWRK 602	Advanced Social Work Practice with Urban Families II	3
SWRK 621	Advanced Social Work Practice with Urban Communities	3
SWRK 622/622P	Specialist Practicum Education with Urban Communities I and Placement	3
SWRK 623/623P	Specialist Practicum Education with Urban Communities II and Placement	3
SWRK 630	Family Crisis, Trauma & Grief	3
SWRK 635	Social Work Research Methods II	3
SWRK 645	Urban Social Policy and Advocacy	3
SWRK 650	Elective	3
SWRK 698	Graduate Project (Capstone)	3

Advanced Generalist Courses

For course descriptions, please see the [MSW section in the CSUN Course Catalog \(website\)](#).

Details about electives can be found in the CSUN catalog under [Selected Topics in Social Work](#).

VI. ETHICAL CONDUCT

Preamble of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW Code of Ethics):

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 attending 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 organization, 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. The 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.

[Read the full NASW Code of Ethics \(website\).](#)

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are 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.

NASW Code of Ethics as applied to the MSW Program

It is the expectation of the CSUN MSW Department for students to uphold the NASW Code of Ethics in the classroom and during the practicum experiences. Please refer to the MSW Practicum Education Application and the MSW Practicum Education Student Agreement. Student behavior that is contrary to the guidelines for professional conduct for social workers as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics will be addressed by course instructors and practicum faculty. Ethical concerns that are not resolved may be reviewed by the Associate Chair, the Department Chair, or the Professionalism & Academic Advisement Committee (PAAC) and could result in dismissal of the student from the program.

VII. UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Department abides by all University policies and procedures.

Non-Discrimination Policy

CSUN is comprised of individuals from diverse backgrounds. The University takes pride in being a culturally pluralistic campus that promotes equal opportunity. It is essential that the entire University community recognize the need for an awareness of, sensitivity to and respect for the cultural heritage, gender and sexual orientation of others. Individual (or group) actions or activities that promote degrading or demeaning social stereotypes based on age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, gender identity, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation or veteran status will not be tolerated. Students who behave abusively toward members of the University community based on the aforementioned criteria will face serious consequences and will be subject to disciplinary action. Any student who commits acts of discrimination, harassment or retaliation manifested by acts or threats of physical abuse, verbal abuse and/or hazing activities may be subject to suspension or expulsion from the University.

[View CSUN's Nondiscrimination policy and Complaint Procedures \(website\).](#)

[View CSUN's Discrimination, Harassment & Retaliation \(DHR\).](#)

Sexual Harassment

All matters of harassment are referred to [Office of Equity and Diversity \(website\)](#).

Title IX requires the university to designate a Title IX Coordinator to monitor and oversee overall Title IX compliance. The campus Title IX Coordinator is available to explain and discuss your right to file a criminal complaint ([Read CSUN's Title IX- Sexual Harassment/Misconduct](#)) the university's complaint process, including the investigation process; how confidentiality is handled; available resources, both on and off campus; and other related matters. If you are in

the midst of an emergency, please call the police immediately by dialing 9-1-1.

Any student believing to be harassed may report incident to the Department Chair, their practicum liaison, or other faculty member. Additionally, students may call (818) 677-2077, or email (equityandcompliance@csun.edu) or visit the office of Equity and Compliance (Valera Hall 285) anytime to ask questions or communicate concerns. Title IX policies will be adhered to in terms of reporting structure. Substantiated charges of harassment by a student may result in dismissal from the program. In addition, the Chair or faculty member may assist the student with reporting the alleged misconduct/violation of the Student Conduct Code to the Office of Equity and Diversity and/or the Associate Vice President for Student Affairs.

In the event that you choose to write or speak about having survived sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking and specify that this violence occurred while you were a CSUN student, federal and state education laws require that your instructor notifies the Campus Title IX Coordinator. You will be contacted to let you know about your rights and options as a survivor and support services at CSUN, including possibilities for holding accountable the person who harmed you.

If You Believe You Have Been Sexually Harassed And/or Harassed:

- Understand that it is not your fault
- Do not be intimidated by a threat of retaliation to you or a family member

[View the Title IX complaint form \(.pdf\).](#)

[Read CSUN's Sexual Assault Policies and Procedures \(.pdf\)](#)

Transfer Credit

Students may transfer up to nine (9) hours of generalist credits from other Council on Social Work Education accredited graduate programs in social work. Only "A" and "B" grades are granted credit at California State University, Northridge. Practicum classes (SWRK 522, 522/P, 523, 523/P, 622, 622/P, 623, and 623/P equivalent) cannot be transferred. The MSW Department Chair must approve all transfer credit. If the student is transferring elective credit, the MSW Department Chair must approve the elective.

Students with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)

Incoming MSW students that have a BSW from an accredited institution may a) apply to join an Advanced Standing cohort (this is only available through the Tseng College online program), or b) pursue "testing out" of coursework upon request. This is a process to ensure that Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students do not have to retake required generalist content they have already mastered (students may not challenge generalist practicum/seminar).

- Students with a BSW awarded within the past 5 years, an overall undergraduate GPA of at least 3.5, and a grade of at least 3.7 (A minus) for the course they are challenging, may petition the Department Chair to take a challenge examination for the course.
- This examination will be the final product of the course being challenged.
- The student will need to pass the final product/exam with a 90% or higher.

- The student still will need to replace these credits and will have to take additional credits of electives to have a total of 60 credits of coursework for the MSW degree.
- Only 9 units may be petitioned
 - For an explanation please visit the [Transfer Work for Graduate Programs section of the CSUN Catalog: Policies and Procedures \(website\)](#).
- SWRK 522/523 cannot be petitioned.

Student Conduct Code

[Title 5, California Code of Regulations, § 4130 Standards for Student Conduct \(website\)](#).

The University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty, and staff. Each member of the campus community should choose behaviors that contribute toward this end. Students are expected to be good citizens and to engage in responsible behaviors that reflect well upon their university, to be civil to one another and to others in the campus community and contribute positively to student and university life.

Student behavior that is not consistent with the Student Conduct Code is addressed through an educational process that is designed to promote safety and good citizenship and, when necessary, impose appropriate consequences.

[Please read the grounds for student discipline \(website\)](#).

Classroom Misconduct

Instructors are responsible for setting both academic and behavioral standards for their courses. Students are expected to comply with established class standards as well as the Student Conduct Code. Students who display disruptive, threatening, or abusive behavior in class are subject to discipline and may be referred for a Departmental Professionalism & Academic Advisement Committee (PAAC) and/or to the Office of Student Affairs. Faculty may eject a student from a single class session when necessary to end seriously disruptive or threatening behavior. Such actions will be reported to the appropriate campus officials.

Students with Disabilities

Students with documented disabilities may request reasonable accommodations for their classes and/or practicum placement through the Disability Resources and Education Center (DRES). The DRES office is located in Bayramian Hall, Room 110. The office can be contacted by phone at (818) 677-2684. Students with documented disabilities are advised to register with DRES upon entering the program so that they may take full advantage of the support and services offered by CSUN. These services include, but are not limited to, note taking/transcribing services, exam proctoring, and mobility assistance. Students who may need accommodations for their practicum placement experience should identify this need on the MSW Practicum Education Application and with the Director of Practicum Education so that reasonable accommodations can be facilitated in a timely fashion. Students are encouraged to take charge of how they present their disability to the prospective placement agency, especially if reasonable accommodations are required.

[View CSUN's Disability Resources and Education Services website for more information \(website\).](#)

Hard-of-Hearing or Deaf Students

Students who are Deaf or Hard-of-Hearing are advised to contact and register with the National Center on Deafness (NCOD) to receive services such as interpreting, speech-to-text transcription, and note taking. The NCOD is located in Jeanne Chisholm Hall. The office can be reached by emailing ncod@csun.edu, phone (818) 677-2054, videophone (818) 671-4443, fax (818) 677-7192, or visit [CSUN's NCOD website](#).

Alcohol and Illicit Drug Policy Information

Consistent with its mission of enabling students to reach their educational goals, CSUN is committed to creating a campus environment that is free from both the illegal and harmful use of alcohol and drugs.

It is the policy of CSUN that the manufacture, possession, distribution, sale, or use of alcohol or illicit drugs on-campus, or off-campus while on university business or participating in university sponsored functions, is prohibited. Drugs may be possessed or used as legally prescribed or when lawfully permitted for the purpose of research or instruction.

The purpose of this policy is to delineate university regulations concerning alcohol and drugs, provide procedural guidelines, communicate the consequences of failing to adhere to established policies, and provide guidance as to available resources.

[View CSUN's Drug Free Campus Policy Information for Students website.](#)

Smoke, and Tobacco-Free Campus Policy Information

It is the policy of California State University, Northridge, to promote the health, wellbeing, and safety of our employees, students, and visitors, to establish a smoke and tobacco-free environment and to encourage non-smoking and tobacco-free lifestyles.

CSUN is a smoke and tobacco-free campus, which means that smoking is prohibited on campus. CSUN implemented this policy because we are committed to providing a cleaner and healthier, smoke-free environment for the entire campus community. [Please visit the Clear the Air Website for more details.](#)

[View CSUN's Smoke- and Tobacco-Free Policy.](#)

Cancellation of Registration and/or Withdrawal from the Institution

Students who find it necessary to cancel their registration or to withdraw from all classes after enrolling for any academic term are required to follow the university's official withdrawal procedures. Failure to follow formal university procedures may result in an obligation to pay fees as well as the assignment of failing grades in all courses and the need to apply for readmission before being permitted to enroll in another academic term. For more information on cancelling, registration and withdrawal procedures, visit the Admissions & Records website.

Medical Withdrawals

A medical withdrawal usually constitutes complete withdrawal from the university for the academic period in question. Requests for complete medical withdrawals should be submitted as soon as possible after the medical condition impairs the student's ability to complete the coursework for which the student is registered.

To request a withdrawal for a medical reason, refer to information provided in the link below and complete the Petition for Withdrawal for Medical Reason form.

[View Graduate Policy regarding Withdrawal and Medical Withdrawal \(website\).](#)

Enrollment in Classes

Students must be enrolled in all required courses prior to the first day of the semester. Please adhere to all Admissions and Records tuition payment deadlines to avoid being dis-enrolled in classes. Students that do not enroll in their classes prior to the first day of the semester may not be able to attend classes and/or internship and may be terminated from the program.

Conditionally Classified Status

Students accepted as Conditionally Classified may be required to fulfill additional requirements prior to achieving Classified Status. Conditionally classified students should communicate with Graduate Studies during their first semester in the program.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

All students from countries in which the official language is not English are required to take the TOEFL exam. Those who do not possess a bachelor's degree from a postsecondary institution where English is the principal language of instruction must receive a minimum score on the internet (iBT) version of the TOEFL of 79. Please refer to the TOEFL website for testing information on [CSUN's International Graduate webpage.](#)

Pre-Admissions Disclosure Regarding Licensure

Admission into programs leading to licensure and credentialing does not guarantee that students will obtain a license or credential. Licensure and credentialing requirements are set by agencies that are not controlled by or affiliated with the CSU and requirements can change at any time. For example, licensure or credentialing requirements can include evidence of the right to work in the United States (e.g., social security number or taxpayer identification number) or successfully passing a criminal background check. Students are responsible for determining whether they can meet licensure or credentialing requirements. The CSU will not refund tuition, fees, or any associated costs, to students who determine subsequent to admission that they cannot meet licensure or credentialing requirements. Information concerning licensure and credentialing requirements is available from the [California Board of Behavioral Sciences \(website\)](#) (licensing board for social workers in California). If you are planning to get licensed outside of California, please check with that state's licensing requirements.

Read the full [Pre-Admission Disclosures and Limiting Admission Offers for Academic Programs Leading to Licensure or Credentialing Policy \(website\)](#).

Grade Appeals

The University considers all grades reported at the end of each semester to be final. Students are responsible for reviewing their grades for accuracy before the end of the subsequent semester. Students who believe they have received a grade in error should promptly ask the instructor to verify and, if appropriate, correct the grade. For more information, [please refer to the University Catalog Academic Grievance and Grade Appeal Policies and Procedures \(website\)](#).

Grades received for the semester of graduation will be considered sealed 60 days after the official date of graduation. However, the deadline to request a grade correction is the end of the semester following that in which the grade was assigned. If the instructor is absent from campus during the subsequent semester, students should promptly consult with the Department Chair about the grade in question. If the Department Chair is unable to contact the instructor, they will notify the Associate Dean of the College in writing that an extension of the grade correction deadline, up to one year, has been granted.

Grades of Incomplete

Students may be granted an incomplete grade “I” when 1) a portion of required course work has not been completed and evaluated in the prescribed time period due to unforeseen but fully justified reasons, and 2) that a substantial portion of the course requirement has been completed with a passing grade and that there is still a possibility of earning credit. The work that is incomplete normally should be of such a nature that it can be completed independently by the student for later evaluation by the instructor. An Incomplete shall not be assigned when a student would be required to attend a major portion of the class when it is next offered. It is the responsibility of the student to bring pertinent information to the attention of the instructor and to determine from the instructor the remaining course requirements that must be satisfied to remove the Incomplete. A final grade is assigned when the agreed-upon work has been completed and evaluated. An “I” must normally be made up within 1 calendar year immediately following the end of the term during which it was assigned. This limitation prevails whether or not the student maintains continuous enrollment.

Students who believe they meet the necessary conditions to be assigned an Incomplete should contact their instructor and the Department to obtain a Request for a Grade of Incomplete form.

[View CSUN’s Policies and Procedures for Administrative Grading Symbols \(website\)](#).

CSUN Academic Dishonesty Policy

Department faculty members are obligated to refer all cases of dishonesty to the Vice President of Student Affairs as outlined in the [CSUN Faculty Policy on Academic Dishonesty \(website\)](#).

The maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this University and the CSU system. Cheating or plagiarism in connection with an academic program at a CSU campus is listed in Section 41301, Title 5, California Code of Regulations as an offense for which a student may be expelled, suspended or given a less severe disciplinary sanction. Academic dishonesty is an especially serious offense and diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend on the integrity of the University's programs.

[View CSUN's complete policy and procedural guidelines for Academic Dishonesty \(website\).](#)

VIII. DEPARTMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Zoom (or other virtual platform) teaching

Students and faculty are not allowed to use ZOOM or any other virtual platform in any on-campus courses, unless specified by the Department Chair, College Dean or University Administration. Classes are scheduled to be held on-campus, in-person (unless you are enrolled in the online program). The only exception is if the University is closed. Classes are not to be held via zoom, and students are not to zoom into MSW courses. Likewise, hybrid courses (combining in-person and online learning) are not approved for stateside MSW programs.

Enrollment in Classes

The CSUN MSW Program operates as a cohort model. This means students are accepted into a specific cohort and take all classes with others in their same cohort. Classes are only offered once per year and at specific times. One of the benefits of a cohort model is that every student is guaranteed a seat in the class(es) required for graduation. However, multiple sections of a course are offered simultaneously and may fill quickly. If you cannot enroll in your first-choice section you may put yourself on the waitlist for that section, but it is highly recommended that you enroll in your second (or third) choice of sections within your cohort meeting time since faculty do not admit off the waitlist. This is to maintain an optimal learning environment for students and faculty. Students who register for a class outside of their cohort (e.g., enrolling in an evening section when they are enrolled in the day-time cohort) will be disenrolled.

Online MSW Program Course Schedules

Online MSW students are assigned to a Matador Color section for each academic year by the Online MSW administrative team. The Matador Color identifies the academic course start times of 5pm or 7pm. Matador Color sections may be reassigned each academic year by the Online MSW administrative team. Online MSW students are not permitted to request a switch in Matador Color sections due to work or internship schedule conflicts. Students are responsible for coordinating their employment and internship schedules to accommodate academic and practicum education seminar courses.

Advising & Mentoring

Since the MSW program is a cohort model, with classes proscribed and seats guaranteed, there is no formal academic advisement. Students are encouraged to build relationships with faculty, staff, and peers, and may seek mentoring and/or professional advice rooted in social work code of ethics and values from within the department. In the event a student is

experiencing academic difficulty, they should communicate with their professor. Placement and internship challenges should be directed to their Practicum Liaison. In the event a student is experiencing non-academic challenges, they are encouraged to seek appropriate assistance from University Counseling Services, the Klotz Student Health Center, faculty, staff, and/or request advisement from the Professionalism & Academic Advisement Committee (PAAC), depending on the nature of the challenge.

Professional and Academic Advisement

The MSW program is committed to providing support and guidance to students while modeling healthy professional boundaries. Students are encouraged to build relationships with faculty, staff, and peers, and may seek mentoring and/or professional advice grounded in social work code of ethics and values from within the department. Students may experience challenges in Practicum Education or academic classes that they are unclear how to navigate. Examples of these challenges include: unresolved personal issues activated by practicum experiences, considering taking a medical leave, managing concerns regarding personal versus professional values, discomfort with approaching professors about curriculum concerns, challenges with peers, or other interpersonal dilemmas.

In the event a student is experiencing academic or practicum difficulty, they are expected to directly communicate with their professor, practicum instructor or practicum liaison first. Students seeking academic or professional advisement are welcomed to submit a [Professional and Academic Advisement Request Form](#) to the Department at msw@csun.edu. Once completed, this form will be dispersed to the Professional and Academic Advisement Committee (PAAC), consisting of the Chair, Associate Chair and Practicum Education Director. The PAAC will reach out to the student to schedule a meeting, discuss the concerns and provide feedback and recommendations consistent with the policies, values and mission of the MSW program and discipline.

Progress Evaluation

It is the responsibility of each student to keep up to date on his or her own progress in the classroom and practicum. In other words, the professor is not responsible for seeking out a student. Students may make appointments with professors. Please email your professors to make an appointment. The professor's obligation as a teacher is to be available on a regular, posted basis and to respond to messages in a timely manner. However, the student must initiate discussion about progress in courses and practicum work.

Program Absences

Please refer to individual syllabi for specific information on attendance for each course.

The Department may request a medical release from a physician stating that the student is able to return to classes and/or internship following any illness or medical procedure.

In some circumstances a leave of absence for up to one academic year may be granted by the Chair of the Department. Students are required to consult with their Practicum Liaison prior to requesting a leave of absence and must submit a formal request by email to the

Chair of the Department or the Director of Online & Offsite Programs. Due to our cohort model, it may not be possible for a student to take a leave of absence and return to a comparable schedule.

Students requesting a leave of absence may be required to reapply to the program.

Please note: the MSW program does not have any form of sick, maternal, paternal or family leave from academic and/or practicum courses. Please refer to the [Medical Withdrawals](#) section of this manual to learn more.

Bringing Children (or anyone outside the program) to Class or Internship

To protect the integrity of the learning environment, the confidentiality of course content, and the safety of all individuals, students are not permitted to bring children (of any age) into class, including lectures, seminars, skills labs, or practicum-based learning activities. Students are also not permitted to bring their partner, spouse, friend, or colleague to classes.

Social work courses frequently involve discussion of sensitive, confidential, and potentially triggering material related to clients, trauma, and professional practice. The presence of children (or those unfamiliar with social work values and ethics) compromises confidentiality, limits full participation, and creates legal and ethical concerns. In addition, the university and the department cannot assume liability for minors or non-CSUN students in instructional spaces.

Students who experience childcare disruptions or emergencies should contact their instructor as soon as possible to discuss appropriate academic options.

Fitness for the Profession Criteria

Students entering CSUN's MSW program are expected to meet the Council on Social Work Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards that mandate demonstration of Competency 1: Ethical and Professional Behavior throughout the entirety of the program. In consideration of Social Work values and ethics and their application in professional practice, students need to be self-reflective and integrate knowledge of professional value and ethics in the classroom and internship site. The expectation is for students to learn and integrate the knowledge, skills, and values of the Social Work profession by adhering to the following:

1. Ability to maintain professional rapport and relationships with clients, colleagues, and classmates.
2. Ability to maintain professional ethics by adhering to the NASW Code of Ethics; ability to demonstrate integrity in relation to:
 - a) ethical practice
 - b) confidentiality
 - c) respect
 - d) honesty of communication
 - e) documenting time
 - f) following through on obligations and contracts

3. Ability to communicate clearly, purposefully, and appropriately.
4. Ability to differentiate between personal and professional attitudes, values, and beliefs.
5. Ability to evaluate, modify, and explain practice decisions.
6. Ability to take direction and assume responsibility for one's own learning.
7. Ability and willingness to evaluate own professional goals, strengths, and limitations.
8. Ability to apply concepts, information, and skills appropriate for use in effective problem solving, intervention, and other social work practice.
9. Ability and willingness to take appropriate risks in order to learn and grow professionally.
10. Ability to assess one's own impact on others.
11. Ability to demonstrate respect for diverse cultures and lifestyles.
12. Ability to take responsibility for decisions.
13. Ability to hear and consider viewpoints different from one's own.
14. Students will demonstrate the ability to receive and integrate critical and constructive feedback.

If, in the professional judgment of a faculty member or practicum liaison, a student is found to be deficient in one or more required areas, the faculty member will meet with the student to discuss the concern and document the conversation. The faculty member and student will collaboratively develop a remediation plan that outlines specific expectations, timelines, and supports. If the student does not demonstrate satisfactory progress within a reasonable period of time, the Social Work Department Chair, Associate Chair, Director of Online Programs, and Director of Practicum Education (collectively, the Professional and Academic Advisement Committee—PAAC) will be notified.

PAAC will review the matter by speaking with involved faculty, examining relevant documentation, and meeting with the student as appropriate. Based on this review, PAAC will develop formal recommendations, which may include initiating a Professionalism and Academic Review Committee (PARC) process, recommending Administrative-Academic Disqualification from the program, or pursuing an alternative resolution. All findings and recommendations will be documented in writing and forwarded to the Dean, with a copy provided to the student.

Evaluation of Student Performance in the MSW Program

The expectations and standards for students of professional versus nonprofessional degree programs are different. In professional programs, the student is often thrust into course work concurrent with hands-on practice situations that have real impact on the lives of real people with real problems and needs. The expectations and standards of professional programs must therefore interweave scholarship with codes of ethical conduct and scientific rigor with professional competency.

The Department of Social Work establishes chief among its goals in delivering a program of graduate education, the preparation of individuals committed to the knowledge, values, and skills of professional social work practice. The establishment of and adherence to a clearly articulated set of programmatic goals and performance standards for the Department's students begins with a recognition that becoming a competent and well-trained professional in social work is a gradual process. Functional standards of performance capitalize on strategies that uplift and do not focus on diminishing people. The Department believes that its program expectations and requirements promote redemptive not punitive interventions when success or progress toward success is not easily forthcoming. This means that not all criteria are expected to be met at all times.

Persons who teach and supervise students, along with program administrators, will assess student performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of the social work profession, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom.

The Department of Social Work employs the following evaluative framework to guide program faculty and administrators in their responsibility for carefully assessing and regularly monitoring students in the Department's programs regarding the student's ability to function effectively across a variety of professional situations including but not limited to the classroom, practicum placement, and other settings where the individual is operating as a social work student.

Evaluative Framework

There are currently three areas of student capacity, performance, and functioning, which are viewed as inexorably linked in determining if program standards are being achieved. As an example, scholastic ability is not sufficient in determining or justifying continued enrollment in the program. That is, all three areas, taken together and/or separately are subject to assessment at regular intervals to determine the appropriateness of a student's continued enrollment in the program. Professionalism and Academic Advisement Committee (PAAC) will be initiated if the department leadership deems the student as having difficulty in one or more of the following student academic performance areas, ethical decision making, or professional use of self.

The three areas of student academic performance are:

1. Ability to acquire professional skills
 - a. Communication Skills
 - i. Demonstrates sufficient written and oral skills to comprehend information

and communicate ideas and feelings.

b. Written Communication

- i. Writes clearly, uses correct grammar and spelling, and applies appropriate writing style, including American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation.
- ii. Demonstrates sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and complete adequately all written assignments as specified by faculty.
- iii. Written work must be mechanically and stylistically acceptable. Serious deficiencies in areas such as spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and coherent organization will result in lower grades.
- iv. Students are encouraged to seek resources to improve academic skills such as writing and study.
- v. Effective use of knowledge: the integration of concepts, theories, and information from readings, lectures, and seminar discussions.
- vi. The inclusion of personal points of view along with rationale, logic, and examples.
- vii. Organization: thesis as part of the introduction, smooth relationship between ideas and between paragraphs, and overall structure, integrative concluding section.
- viii. Clarity: understandability, good style and form
- ix. Syntax, grammar, and spelling
- x. Timely completion and submission of all written assignments

c. Oral Communication

- i. Communicates effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals. Expresses ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrates a willingness and an ability to listen to others. Demonstrates sufficient skills in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of practicum placement experiences, as specified by faculty and practicum placement agency.

d. Interpersonal Skills

- i. Demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to meet or exceed the ethical obligations of the profession. These skills include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. The student takes appropriate responsibility for own actions and considers the impact of their actions on others. Effective learning demands active participation. In order to enhance feelings of safety, and to create a positive learning environment, the following must apply:
- ii. Attends classes and practicum placement and is prompt, timely, and

- engaged in the learning process.
- iii. Reads assigned course material.
- iv. Get their needs met by interacting with others and by raising their concerns and criticisms with the instructor. Completes all of one's work. Takes personal ownership of expressions of bigotry. In other words, rather than attribute a negative characteristic to a social group or to a member of that group, one begins with, "this is how I have been taught to believe," or "I don't like to admit it but I do have the belief that..."
- v. Commits to personal/professional growth and self-exploration and behaves in a nonviolent manner.
- e. Cognitive Skills
 - i. Exhibits sufficient knowledge of social work and clarity of thinking to process information and applies it to appropriate situations in classroom and practicum placement settings. Demonstrate a clear grounded-ness in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research - including knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice and self as practitioner. Exhibits ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and apply that knowledge across various settings the student must function in, including but not limited to settings and transactions in the classroom, practicum placement, with clients, supervisors, faculty, and other classmates.
- f. Physical Skills
 - i. Exhibits sufficient motor and sensory abilities to regularly attend and actively participate in class and practicum placement with or without accommodations. All accommodations recommended through the DRES office or National Center on Deafness will be provided.
- 2. Emotional and Mental Abilities Necessary for Performance in the Program and Professional Practice
 - a. Stress Management
 - i. Demonstrates ability to recognize and deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms. Handles stress effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive (appropriate) relationships with colleagues, peers, and others. Students are encouraged to seek department (Restorative Justice Council) and/or University level (counseling center) resources to assess the best approach to better coping and adaptation.
 - b. Emotional Mental Capacities
 - i. Uses sound judgment based on assessment by advisor, faculty, and/or department leadership. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Students are encouraged to seek department (Restorative

Justice Council) and/or University level (counseling center) resources to assess the best approach to better coping and adaptation.

- ii. Engages in counseling resources for self or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties:
 - 1. Compromise scholastic performance.
 - 2. Interfere with professional judgment, behavior, and performance.
 - 3. Jeopardize the best interests of those for whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in Section 4.05a of the NASW Code of Ethics).
 - 4. MSW students whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their academic or professional judgment, behavior, or performance will be assessed by Department administrators and may be referred to the PARC process with recommendations to adjust workload, terminating the program, or taking any other necessary steps to protect clients and others (as outlined in Section 4.05b in the NASW Code of Ethics).

3. Professional Performance Skills Necessary for Work with Clients and Professional Practice

a. Professional Commitment

- i. Exhibits a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Demonstrates commitment to the core principles and essential values of social work that includes respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her rights to a just share of society's resources (social justice).

b. Self-Awareness

- i. Students are to exhibit knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one's own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one's own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes with working with clients and other professionals.

c. Ethical Obligations

- i. Current behavior and classroom performance demonstrate adherence to the ethical expectations and obligations of professional practice, noted in the NASW Code of Ethics. Ethical behaviors include:
 - 1. Adherence to the NASW Code of Ethics.
 - 2. No history of convictions which are contrary to professional

practice.

3. Systematic evaluation of clients and their situations in an unbiased, factual way. Suspension of personal biases during interactions with others.
4. Comprehension of another individual's way of life and values. Empathic communication and support of the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.
5. Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients.
6. Demonstration of respect for the rights of others. Commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination. Maintenance of confidentiality as it relates to human service, classroom activities, and practicum placement. Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences and qualifications; doing one's own work; giving credit for the ideas of others; and providing proper citation of source materials.
7. Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

Academic and Professional Conduct Standards

Students have the right to express disagreement related to their academic and professional performance. Students are advised to deal with concerns or problems before they become insurmountable.

Academic Concerns in the Classroom

The following steps should be taken when students have concerns or problems related to academic performance:

- Resolution of student academic difficulties should first be initiated and negotiated between the student and the classroom instructor. Students should assume responsibility in initiating and negotiating a resolution of the academic difficulty with the classroom instructor.
- If the student feels that resolution of the academic difficulty appears improbable, then the student should consult the Department Chairperson or Director of Online Programs.
- It is the intent of these guidelines that most student academic difficulties can be resolved at

the classroom level or in joint consultation with the Department Chairperson.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in MSW Classes

The use of Artificial intelligence (AI) in the social work profession is an emerging area of practice. As technology continues to play an increasingly significant role in the field of social work, CSUN's MSW Department recognizes the potential benefits and challenges associated with the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The use of AI has raised questions about how to harness its benefits, mitigate its risks, and ensure it aligns with the values and standards in the NASW Code of Ethics and the mission of the MSW program. By adhering to these guidelines, students will contribute to the ethical application of AI in social work, aligned with our commitment to promoting antiracist, intersectional, trauma informed and ethical practice.

Guidelines:

1. Educational Use:

- Students are responsible for clear communication with faculty regarding the use of AI in course assignments, and for transparent acknowledgement (including citation) when it is used. Such use should align with academic requirements, course learning objectives and CSWE competencies.

2. Ethical Considerations:

- Prioritize the ethical implications of using AI in social work contexts. Consider the potential impact on vulnerable populations, cultural sensitivity, and the broader ethical principles of the social work profession. Use of AI in direct practice settings should be carefully crafted in conjunction with Practicum Instructor, Practicum Liaison, and with client consent.

3. Integrity and Humanity:

- AI can be beneficial but social workers must carefully evaluate its use and, when incorporating it into practice, ensure they do not abandon the human connection and empathy that is essential to social work. Social work knowledge, values, skills, and critical consciousness must be centered. AI may assist social workers in improving the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities but it lacks the level of critical thinking, reflection, analysis, and compassion of a social worker. AI should be another tool social workers use to support people, to enhance their work rather than replace it.

4. Supervision and Consultation:

- Seek guidance from each faculty member when incorporating AI into coursework, research projects, or field placements. Engage in ongoing dialogue to address ethical concerns and ensure responsible use. If a professor asks students NOT to use AI for assignments and students do so surreptitiously, this is considered a breach of academic integrity, honesty and is a violation of professionalism.

5. Privacy and Confidentiality:

- Uphold the principles of privacy and confidentiality when utilizing AI tools. Ensure that data collected or analyzed adheres to ethical standards, respecting the rights and dignity of individuals involved.

6. Cultural Competence:

- Be mindful of potential biases in AI algorithms and strive to mitigate any negative impact on diverse populations. Consider the cultural context and social implications when using AI in social work practice. Be vigilant in addressing and mitigating any biases to ensure fair and equitable outcomes for all clients.

7. Informed Consent:

- When AI tools involve human subjects, obtain informed consent in accordance with ethical guidelines. Clearly communicate the purpose, potential risks, and benefits of using AI to all relevant stakeholders.

8. Professional Development:

- Stay informed about advancements in AI technology and its applications in social work. Engage in professional development opportunities to enhance AI-related skills and knowledge. The NASW continues to post emerging information and data regarding AI and its alignment with ethical values and standards:
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/AI-and-Social-Work>.

Consequences of Non-compliance: Course syllabi and university policy prohibit plagiarism.

Submitting AI generated assignments and presenting them as your own may constitute plagiarism.

Violations of this policy may result in academic consequences, including but not limited to disciplinary actions, academic probation, or dismissal from the program.

Grades

Academic standards apply to class work attendance and performance, practicum education performance and attendance, as well as ethical and professional conduct. (Please refer to the Practicum Education Manual Section for further information on academic standards for practicum education performance.)

- Students must maintain a minimum 3.0 ("B") GPA to remain enrolled in the program.
- Students are permitted three units of a "C" grade on their transcript. An additional 3 units or more of a grade of "C" (or below) may result in dismissal from the MSW program or a delay in progressing to the next semester's classes.
- No grade below a "C" can be counted toward graduation.
- Any grade of "C MINUS" or below must be repeated (after an approved course repeat form has been filed with Graduate Studies). If the student does not receive a "C" or better on the second attempt, the student may be dismissed from the MSW program. See Graduate Studies requirements for more information. [Please refer to CSUN's GPA](#)

[requirements for Graduate Programs Policy.](#)

- If a student already has three units of a "C" grade on their transcript, the student will need to pass all remaining courses with a "C PLUS" or higher. Per University policy, a maximum of 6 units may be repeated.
- Due to our cohort model, repeating a course (with the exception of SWRK 523 being extended into summer) may result in delayed program continuation and graduation.
- In the event of an unresolved academic dispute, the student may elect to use the [University Academic Grievance and Grade Appeal \(AGGA\) Procedures \(website\)](#).

Professional Performance Concerns

Professional performance is based on conduct that occurs during a student's time in the MSW program. The ethical standards of conduct expected of social work students are primarily articulated in the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics. Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and Standards of the Social Work Department. Failure to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics may result in a recommendation for a PAAC, and potentially MSW program dismissal for professional reasons.

Procedures Governing Reinstatement

If a student has been terminated from the program due to an academic, professional, or ethical issue, reinstatement in any of the CSUN graduate social work programs will not be allowed.

IX. PRACTICUM EDUCATION

Overview

Philosophy

The California State University, Northridge (CSUN) Practicum Education Program utilizes agency-based internship experiences and accompanying practicum education seminar courses to integrate and reinforce classroom instruction. The practicum education curriculum consists of a sequenced series of courses—522, 522P, 523, 523P, 622, 622P, 623, and 623P—which are integral components of the MSW program. Successful completion of all 12 practicum education units is required for the conferral of the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree. Practicum education is a cornerstone of the program, playing a critical role in preparing students to become competent and ethical professional social workers.

Practicum education internships provide students with comprehensive learning opportunities across micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. Agency-based internships enable students to actively engage in addressing the needs of and providing services to individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and broader societal systems.

Through these experiences, students not only develop the practical skills and theoretical competencies necessary for effective direct and indirect practice but also cultivate a deep understanding of the social work profession's core values and ethical foundations. Practicum education fosters professional growth by emphasizing standards of practice, ethical conduct,

effective communication, and adherence to organizational protocols, thereby preparing students for responsible and impactful professional roles.

Council on Social Work Education

Practicum education is recognized by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) as the “signature pedagogy” of social work education. The CSUN MSW Practicum Education Program adheres to CSWE’s Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The CSUN MSW Program administers practicum education in alignment with department goals and objectives, emphasizing a multicultural and multiracial perspective on human systems and the helping process. As mandated, the Practicum Education program maintains written policies, procedures, and criteria for administering the program. These policies and procedures include the selection of practicum placements, a structured process for monitoring student progress and maintaining ongoing communication between the Practicum Education Liaison and placement agencies, and an established method for evaluating both student performance and the effectiveness of agencies providing practicum instruction.

Code of Ethics

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics is integrated throughout practicum education seminars and internships. It is addressed through vignette discussions, practice scenarios, and practicum instruction to support students in connecting course content with the development of ethical practice skills (refer to the NASW Code of Ethics).

Within practicum education courses, students develop and demonstrate a foundational understanding of, and commitment to, social work values and ethics. This includes cultivating self-awareness, identifying personal values and biases, and effectively managing the complexities inherent in ethical dilemmas, such as those involving confidentiality, professional boundaries, and the right to self-determination.

Students are expected to demonstrate competence through a professional commitment to the Code of Ethics and the standards of the social work profession, regardless of client population, agency context, community setting, or personal values. This commitment is reflected in the professional use of self, as demonstrated through attitudes, behaviors, communication, and practice.

All students are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.

Student Ethical and Professional Behavior

While enrolled in the MSW program, students are expected to demonstrate the ethical, professional, and interpersonal skills necessary to effectively engage with clients and communities, as well as with faculty, staff, interdisciplinary professionals, and peers. These expectations align with the standards outlined in Section 4.05(b) of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

Core skills include, but are not limited to, cultural humility, adherence to confidentiality, maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries, critical thinking, awareness of power dynamics, and consistent demonstration of respect and consideration for others.

Students whose personal challenges—such as psychosocial distress, mental health concerns, and/or substance use—interfere with professional judgment or behavior, impair their ability to provide harm-reducing services, or negatively impact academic or professional performance may be subject to review. Such concerns will be assessed by Department administrators (including the Department Chair, Associate Chair, and Practicum Education Administrators) in consultation with the Associate Dean of the College and the Office of Student Conduct to determine the student's status in the program. As part of this process, actions may include a leave of absence and/or the verification of steps toward recovery or remediation as a condition for continued enrollment. Failure to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and the competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the MSW program, regardless of the student's academic standing or maintenance of a 3.0 grade point average.

Strengths-Based Perspective

Practicum education courses are grounded in a strengths-based perspective, which is emphasized throughout both the generalist and specialized years of the MSW curriculum. Students develop the ability to apply critical thinking skills across all phases of practice, including engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation, and termination.

Critical Thinking Skills

Students are expected to develop and demonstrate critical thinking skills in both classroom and internship settings. The integration of classroom learning with internship experience is facilitated through collaboration between the Practicum Education Instructor and the student, with a focus on the application of course material and the development of critical thinking in practice.

Practicum Education Purpose and Learning Objectives

Generalist Year

The purpose of the generalist year practicum is to provide students with generalist social work practice and hands-on skills. During the generalist year, students are placed in a social work agency that meets Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), and the CSUN MSW Program placement requirements.

Internship assignments are based on the Practicum Education team's assessment of each student's prior experience and identified learning needs. Students are required to complete an MSW Practicum Education Application, participate in an agency interview, and fulfill all agency onboarding requirements and background clearances prior to the start of the internship. Failure to complete these requirements may delay and impact matriculation in the MSW program.

The generalist year internship requires students to complete sixteen (16) hours per week, including a 30- or 60-minute lunch break in accordance with the agency's policy, at the same internship site throughout the first academic year. Internship days and schedules may vary depending on the student's cohort. All schedules must be approved by the Practicum Education Liaison and documented in the Practicum Calendar and Learning Agreement.

In addition to the internship, students are required to participate in a practicum education seminar course, which provides support, feedback, and opportunities for peer consultation regarding experiences in the internship setting. Practicum education seminar course schedules are assigned by the Practicum Education Administrative team and are dependent on the cohort schedule.

Specialized Advanced Generalist Year

The purpose of the advanced generalist (specialized) year of practicum education is for students to build upon the micro, mezzo, and macro knowledge and skills developed during the generalist year. Through advanced coursework, students further expand the application of their skills in practice.

Advanced practice competencies include increased self-analysis and reflection, greater professional autonomy, effective use of practicum instruction, management of more complex caseloads, and the ability to address legal and ethical issues in practice.

Advanced Standing Program

CSUN's Advanced Standing Program is designed to prepare students to develop a career trajectory in integrative behavioral health. Students who hold a BSW from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited program are eligible for admission to the Advanced Standing MSW program. These students enter directly into the Advanced Generalist Year.

Students in the Advanced Standing Program are required to secure an integrative behavioral health placement, complete 20 hours per week (for a minimum total of 600 internship hours), and attend a monthly integrative behavioral health enrichment seminar, in addition to the advanced generalist practicum education seminar.

Practicum Education Courses (Internship and Seminar)

The practicum education internship is an extension of the practicum education seminar and designed to meet CSWE learning competencies. It provides an applied educational experience that exposes students to the three levels of social work practice: micro, mezzo, and macro. Through supervised practice, students apply theories and knowledge acquired in both generalist and specialized coursework. The internship also offers opportunities for reflection, skill development, and the cultivation of competence and confidence in professional practice. This educational and training process is essential in preparing students to enter the social work profession, equipping them with a range of engagement techniques and appropriate interventions for diverse settings and populations. Students are required to participate in a practicum education seminar course, which provides support, feedback, and peer consultation regarding experiences in the practicum setting. The seminar is a curriculum-based course in which students are expected to demonstrate

progressive development in social work practice proficiency, aligned with generalist and specialized practicum education goals and objectives.

In the generalist year, students complete assignments that promote self-awareness, competency-based learning, cultural humility, and foundational practice skills through integrated internship and seminar experiences. In the specialized (advanced generalist) year, assignments emphasize deeper insight, increased understanding of agency and client systems, and the refinement of advanced social work skills across a range of practice contexts. Practicum seminar courses, taught by the Practicum Education Liaison, are held approximately one hour per week throughout the program.

The practicum education course sequence (SWRK 522, 522P, 523, 523P, 622, 622P, 623, and 623P) must be taken concurrently with social work practice courses. Each practicum course carries three (3) units of credit, consisting of two (2) units for internship and one (1) unit for the seminar. Students receive a single grade for all three units.

- **SWRK 522 and SWRK 522P** – Generalist Practicum Education I and Placement (3 units)
 - The same semester grade is assigned for both the two-unit section and the one-unit “P” section.
- **SWRK 523 and SWRK 523P** – Generalist Practicum Education II and Placement (3 units)
 - The same semester grade is assigned for both the two-unit section and the one-unit “P” section.
- **SWRK 622 and SWRK 622P** – Advanced Practicum Education with Urban Communities I and Placement (3 units)
 - The same semester grade is assigned for both the two-unit section and the one-unit “P” section.
- **SWRK 623 and SWRK 623P** – Advanced Practicum Education with Urban Communities II and Placement (3 units)
 - The same semester grade is assigned for both the two-unit section and the one-unit “P” section.

Practicum Education Grading Policy

Students receive one combined grade for the practicum education seminar (SWRK 522/523 and SWRK 622/623) and the practicum education internship (SWRK 522P/523P and SWRK 622P/623P). Practicum education course grades are determined by the Practicum Education Liaison, with input from the Practicum Education Instructor, and are based on the following:

- Student performance at the placement agency, as reflected in Student Evaluations;
- Ability to accept critical and constructive feedback to support professional development and growth;
- Willingness to engage as an open and receptive learner;
- Active and engaged participation, attendance, and punctuality in both the practicum seminar and internship;
- Completion of practicum seminar and internship assignments, including quality and timeliness;

- Ability to address and resolve conflicts directly with peers, supervisors, agency staff, clients, Practicum Education faculty and staff, and Practicum Education Instructors;
- Professional use of self;
- Prompt and professional follow-through during the placement process;
- Compliance with guidelines outlined in a Student Support Plan (if applicable); and
- Professional behavior, including adherence to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics.

Students are required to earn a grade of “B-” or higher in each practicum education course to continue in the CSUN MSW Program.

Grading components for practicum education courses are outlined in a standardized grading rubric and include professional use of self, class attendance, class participation, and completion of various assignments. A detailed description of these components is provided in the course syllabi and is reviewed at the beginning of the practicum education seminar course.

Student Support Plan

For students experiencing challenges that impact their ability to meet the learning objectives of the practicum education courses, a Student Support Plan (SSP) will be initiated by the Practicum Education Liaison in consultation with the Assistant Directors of Practicum Education. The SSP is designed to support and strengthen student performance in both the internship and the practicum seminar.

The SSP is developed by the Practicum Education Liaison in collaboration with the Practicum Education Instructor and the student, and includes:

1. Competency-based behaviors or learning activities that require improvement to ensure a successful practicum experience;
2. Methods for monitoring and evaluating the student’s progress; and
3. Specific timelines and deadlines by which identified objectives must be achieved.

Once completed, reviewed, and signed by all relevant parties, the SSP will be implemented and reviewed in accordance with the outlined plan.

If a student’s performance does not improve or fails to meet the expectations established in the SSP, their course grade may be adversely affected, and they may be at risk of failing the practicum education course. Students must meet the expectations outlined in the SSP to continue progressing in the program. An SSP may be initiated only once per academic year. If performance concerns are more pervasive or involve ethical or legal issues, the Practicum Education Program will refer the matter to the Department Chair for further review.

Failure to Perform Satisfactorily

Earning a grade of “C” indicates that a student is in jeopardy of not meeting the expectations of the practicum education courses. Students who earn a grade of “C” are required to meet with both the Assistant Director of Practicum Education and the Director of Practicum Education to obtain approval to continue in practicum education courses prior to the start of the next semester. Approval to continue is based on the Practicum Education Liaison's individual grading rubric documenting the student's learning process and progress in the practicum education courses.

Students who earn a grade of “C+”, “C” or “C-” in their final Practicum Education courses (SWRK 623/ 623P) will not be eligible to graduate. The student will be required to return during the following academic year, when the course is next offered, to retake the practicum education courses (SWRK 623/623P) and SWRK 698 (Graduate Project).

Requesting an Incomplete Grade

If an Incomplete is granted and the coursework is not completed within the agreed-upon timeframe, the student will receive a failing grade for both the practicum seminar and internship courses. The student will not be permitted to matriculate to the next semester, which may delay their graduation. Due to Graduate Project requirements, students may not request an Incomplete in Practicum Education courses during their final semester.

Practicum Education courses follow a prerequisite model; therefore, prior semester coursework must be completed before beginning the next semester. A request for an Incomplete grade, for both Practicum Education courses (practicum seminar and internship), allows a student additional time to complete required coursework and earn a passing grade.

To request an Incomplete, the student must:

- Initiate the request;
- Have completed at least 80% of course assignments; and
- Be earning a passing grade at the time of the request.

Note: Students who are behind by more than 40 internship hours are not eligible to request an Incomplete.

If an Incomplete is granted and the coursework is not completed within the agreed-upon timeframe, the student will receive a failing grade for both the practicum seminar and internship courses.

All Incomplete coursework must be completed before the beginning of the following semester. If the student fails both courses or receives a grade below a C+, they will not be permitted to matriculate to the next semester, which may delay their graduation.

Due to Graduate Project requirements, students may not request an Incomplete in Practicum Education courses during their final semester.

Practicum Education Withdrawal Policy

The MSW Program upholds university standards for course withdrawal while recognizing the professional responsibilities expected of graduate-level students. Withdrawals are permitted only for serious and compelling reasons, such as:

- Documented medical conditions;
- Significant personal hardship; or
- Unforeseen circumstances beyond the student's control that interfere with academic performance.

Withdrawal requests require:

- Appropriate supporting documentation;
- Approval from the course instructor; and
- Approval from designated university officials.

Approval is not automatic and will be granted only when sufficient justification is provided. Students are expected to demonstrate responsibility, proactive communication, and adherence to university procedures when managing academic challenges.

Termination of Practicum Site

Practicum agencies reserve the right to terminate students at any time for behaviors deemed inappropriate or unethical by the Practicum Education Instructor or agency. While such occurrences are infrequent, they represent a serious disruption to academic progress and may impact successful completion of the MSW program.

Students are required to remain at the same practicum site for the entire academic year. However, a practicum internship may be terminated if:

- Violation of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics;
- Failure to meet expected performance standards, as outlined in CSWE Competency 1 – Ethical and Professional Behavior, including professional boundaries, integrity, time management, communication, documentation, attendance, punctuality, and completion of internship tasks;
- Ongoing unprofessional behavior at the practicum site, seminar course, or both (e.g., poor boundaries, tardiness, absenteeism, inappropriate conduct, late assignments, or failure to perform at a graduate level);

- Life events or major changes that prevent the student from meeting CSWE/EPAS learning objectives; or
- Recognition by the student that pursuing their MSW degree is no longer aligned with their professional goals.

Students terminated from their agency before the end of the semester will not be replaced until the next academic year. The student must immediately stop attending Practicum Education and Micro Practice courses and will receive a failing grade in these courses. They will not be allowed to matriculate to the next semester, delaying graduation.

If a student is terminated or dismissed by the agency:

- They must cease attendance in both internship and practicum seminar courses;
- They will receive a failing grade in both Practicum Education courses (SWRK 522/522P, 523/523P, 622/622P, or 623/623P), and all practicum hours and assignments will not be credited;
- They must withdraw from current Micro Practice course (e.g., SWRK 510, 503, 601, or 602) and will receive a “W” for the semester; retaking the Practice course is required concurrently with the Practicum Education courses;
- Due to the prerequisite model, all coursework, including internship requirements, must be completed before advancing to the next semester; courses are offered only once per academic year, requiring students to retake courses when next available;
- If a student is terminated a second time by a replacement agency, they will not be replaced a third time and may be at risk for dismissal from the MSW program;
- Failure to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE Core Competencies places the student at risk of dismissal, regardless of maintaining a 3.0 GPA.

Practicum Education Performance issues due to Agency Deficiencies

If the student’s internship performance problems are due to deficits in the agency’s practices for the following:

- Lack of clients
- Inconsistent practicum education instruction
- Practicum Education Instructor leaves
- Agency reorganization
- Interpersonal agency conflicts impacting learning process
- Violations of the NASW Code of Ethics
- Harassment or discrimination,
- Agency risk management concerns as it relates to students

The Practicum Education Liaison will assess the matter with the Assistant Director of Practicum Education. Following the assessment, if the decision made is that the agency assignment is not in the best educational interest of the student, then the student will be removed from that agency

and placed at a different agency.

If the student is replaced due to agency deficiency, the student's hours and EBRs completed up until removal from agency will be applied towards the student's total number of hours and EBRs at the replacement agency.

Practicum Education Assignments

Internship Hour Requirements

Fall internship hours begin immediately following the Labor Day holiday, and Spring internship hours resume the week before classes begin. **Please note:** Practicum Education internships resume prior to the start of the Spring semester. Additionally, students may be required to complete internship hours during academic breaks (e.g., winter and spring breaks) to meet required hours and ensure continuity of services for assigned clients or projects. Students who plan to complete hours during holiday breaks must obtain prior approval from their Practicum Education Liaison.

- **Campus-based, first-year full-time students** are required to complete 450 hours during the academic year at a CSUN-approved practicum placement agency. Internship hours are completed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, across two 8-hour days per week. With approval from the Practicum Education Liaison and Practicum Education Instructor, students may complete the 16 hours as one 8-hour day and two 4-hour days. Students must complete a minimum of 200 hours by the end of the Fall semester.
- **Campus-based, second-year full-time students** are required to complete 600 hours during the academic year at a CSUN-approved practicum placement agency. Internship hours are completed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, across two 8-hour days and one 4-hour day per week. Students must complete a minimum of 260 hours by the end of the Fall semester.
- **PPSC/CWA students** are required to complete 600 hours during the academic year to fulfill the PPSC/CWA requirements at a CSUN-approved school-based practicum site. Internship hours are completed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, across two 8-hour days and one 4-hour day per week. Students must complete a minimum of 260 hours by the end of the Fall semester.
- **Campus-based part-time and online students** are required to complete 500 hours during the academic year at a CSUN-approved practicum placement agency. Internship hours are completed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, across two 8-hour days per week. With approval from the Practicum Education Liaison and Practicum Education Instructor, students may complete the 16 hours as one 8-hour day and two 4-hour days. Students must complete a minimum of 225 hours by the end of the Fall semester.
- **Advanced Standing students** are required to complete 600 hours during the academic year at a CSUN-approved practicum placement agency. Internship hours are completed during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, across two 8-hour days and one 4-hour day per week. Students must complete a minimum of 260 hours by the end of the Fall semester.

CSUN MSW PRACTICUM EDUCATION REQUIRED HOURS

	Campus-Based 2-year Cohort		Campus-Based 3-year and Online Cohorts		Advanced Standing Cohort
	1 st Year	2 nd Year	1 st Year	2 nd Year	1 st Year
Hours per week (not including lunch or other breaks)	16	20	16	16	20
Hours Required	450	600	500	500	600
Schedule type	Two 8-hour days <u>OR</u> one 8-hr day and two 4-hr day	Two 8 hour days and one 4-hour day	Two 8-hour days <u>OR</u> one 8-hr day and two 4-hr day	Two 8-hour days <u>OR</u> one 8-hr day and two 4-hr day	Two 8 hour days and one 4-hour day
Hours completed by Fall semester	200	260	225	225	260

Practicum Education hours are counted only when the student is physically present at the internship site. Hours are not credited when a student is not attending internship. Students should not schedule or count internship hours on agency/University holidays or during agency closures. Students are not required to attend internship on University holidays and will not earn internship hour credit for these days. If the agency is open on a University Holiday and the student requests to attend internship, approval is required by both the Practicum Education Instructor and the Practicum Education Liaison.

During the academic year, students may complete **only** the required weekly hours as designated by their cohort model (e.g., 16 or 20 hours per week). Practicum Education internship is an academic course; therefore, students **CANNOT** officially begin internship until the first week of September and the third week of January. However, hours spent participating in required agency orientations and/or trainings (not to exceed 16-20 hours per week, depending on their cohort) prior to the official start date may be counted toward the total internship hours for the Fall semester.

Absences from internships and seminar can impact student's practicum education grades and matriculation through the program. Students are required to notify their Practicum Education Instructor and Practicum Education Liaison of any changes to their Practicum Education Calendar. Significant schedule changes require approval from the Practicum Education Program and could result in an early termination from the internship, which results in a failing grade.

Concerns related to absences or chronic absenteeism must be addressed with both the Practicum Education Liaison and the Practicum Education Instructor. If absenteeism is determined to be disruptive to the internship experience and/or client care, a determination will be made regarding the student's continuation in the practicum internship placement. Any deviation from the originally approved schedule must be approved by the Practicum Education Instructor, the Practicum Education Liaison, and, when applicable, the Practicum Education Administrative team. Students may not end or change their practicum internship placement without prior approval from the Practicum Education Administrative team.

Students may not engage in clinical client service delivery prior to the official start of the academic year. Students must be covered under the University's malpractice insurance before providing services to clients; this coverage becomes effective only at the start of the academic year.

Students **CANNOT** accrue extra internship hours in an intensive format (i.e., exceeding the required weekly hours for their cohort). If students need to make up hours due to brief medical or personal absences or other unplanned circumstances (e.g., agency closures), these hours may be completed during winter break and/or spring break. The following limits apply:

- Campus-based, full-time 2nd year students, and students earning PPSC/CWA can complete a maximum of 24 hours per week during winter break and/or spring break when classes are not in session;
- Campus-based, full-time 1st year students, part-time students, and online students can complete a maximum of 20 hours per week during winter break and/or spring break when classes are not in session;
- Some agencies may require students to extend their internship beyond May; such extensions require approval from the Assistant Directors of Practicum Education.

Failure to complete the minimum required hours will impact the student's Practicum Education course grade and may delay progression in the program.

Students in the 3-year campus-based program who begin internship in the first year and need to defer during the fall semester may delay the start of their internship for one (1) year; however, previously accrued hours may not be carried forward to the next internship.

Practicum Education Calendars

Students are required to complete a Practicum Education Calendar at the beginning of the Fall and Spring semesters, identifying internship days and hours. The calendar must be approved by both the Practicum Education Instructor and the Practicum Education Liaison. Students are expected to meet the minimum hour requirements at the end of each semester as outlined in their cohort-specific calendar. The Practicum Education Calendar should be developed to support optimal student learning and align with agency expectations for continuity of client care and project work. The calendar schedule is not to be scheduled for student convenience.

Learning Agreement

Students, in collaboration with their Practicum Education Instructor, are required to complete a Learning Agreement at the beginning of the academic year. The Learning Agreement must be submitted to the Practicum Education Liaison within the first month of the practicum. It identifies student-specific learning goals and objectives aligned with each competency and reflects internship experiences.

Student Practicum Education Evaluations

Practicum Education evaluations provide feedback on the student's level of integrity and professionalism in interactions with clients, peers, agency staff, supervisors, and Practicum

Education Instructors. Evaluations are completed by the Practicum Education Instructor and reviewed directly with the student.

Mid-Semester Student Evaluation

The Mid-Semester Evaluation provides the Practicum Education Liaison with an update on the student's progress, identifies any concerns that may need to be addressed, and highlights areas of strength and growth for the remainder of the semester. Practicum Education Instructors complete this evaluation approximately during the 7th or 8th week of both the Fall and Spring semesters.

End-of-Semester Student Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation, based on the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) nine core EPAS competencies, is completed at the end of both the Fall and Spring semesters. Students are also required to complete a self-evaluation approximately three weeks prior to the end of each semester.

Practicum Education Instruction

Students are expected to participate in weekly, one-hour individual practicum instruction. A consistent, regularly scheduled supervision time should be established and maintained.

Journals

Generalist-year students are required to complete and submit practicum journals to their Practicum Education Liaison throughout the academic year. Journals are a practicum education seminar assignment. Journal entries should be reflective summaries responding to assigned prompts. Assignment of journals in the Specialized-Advanced Generalist year is at the discretion of the Practicum Education Liaison.

Educationally Based Recordings (EBRs)

Students are required to complete eight (8) EBRs in the Fall semester and ten (10) in the Spring semester. No more than one EBR may be submitted per week to the Practicum Education Instructor. EBRs serve as a learning tool to assess student process and progress. They are considered coursework and may not be completed during agency time in place of client interaction or agency responsibilities.

Practicum Education Expectations

Confidentiality

Information shared in the Practicum Education Seminar Course regarding agencies and clients is protected under the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and is to be used solely for educational purposes within the classroom. Students must always maintain strict

client confidentiality. Under no circumstances should identifying information be disclosed, including names or details that could reasonably identify a client.

Discussion of confidential information outside the classroom, including information about clients, Practicum Education Instructors, peers, or agencies, constitutes a breach of confidentiality and may result in consequences by the CSUN Social Work Department, NASW, and/or affected parties.

Professional Communication

Students are expected to adhere to CSWE EPAS Standards and the NASW Code of Ethics in all professional communications. This includes expressing needs, concerns, and feedback in a respectful and professional manner. Unprofessional communication—such as gossip, negative discourse, or aggressive or passive behaviors—is not acceptable. Students are expected to engage in open, honest, and professional communication with faculty, agency staff, department personnel, and peers.

Zoom Protocols

Students are expected to attend all Practicum Education Zoom meetings and trainings and adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Keep camera on
2. Ensure the environment is professional and confidential
3. Remain muted unless speaking or called upon
4. Use “I” statements
5. Refrain from speaking for others
6. Avoid interrupting others
7. Utilize raise-hand or chat features appropriately
8. Listen without judgment and respect multiple perspectives
9. Participate professionally in all meetings and trainings
10. Be prepared to share learning experiences
11. Remain open to differing perspectives
12. Respectfully agree to disagree

Practicum Education Meetings

Practicum Education meetings, seminars, and classes are designated learning environments intended exclusively for enrolled MSW students and authorized instructional personnel. This ensures confidentiality, maintains professional learning standards, and supports compliance with university privacy regulations and Practicum Education program policies.

Students are **not permitted** to invite or bring non-students—including friends, peers from other programs, family members, partners, colleagues, or supervisors—to Practicum Education meetings, seminars, classes, supervision sessions, or program-related educational activities.

Attendance is limited to:

- Enrolled MSW students registered in the course or seminar
- Assigned faculty or instructors
- Approved Practicum Education staff
- Guest speakers formally invited and approved by the program or instructor

Students may request the presence of the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Associate Dean as a neutral party in meetings.

Practicum Education meetings and classes may include discussion of:

- Confidential practicum experiences
- Agency-related information
- Client-related learning material
- Professional development topics
- Student performance and supervision

Restricting attendance helps protect client confidentiality, student privacy, and the integrity of professional training, while ensuring compliance with applicable privacy regulations.

Practicum Education Model

CSUN's Practicum Education Program is based on a traditional, in-person model, regardless of cohort.

- Approved agencies are community-based and provide learning experiences with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Approved agencies must offer in-person internship opportunities for all students to engage directly with clients and constituencies.
- Agencies operating under a hybrid model must require students to be on-site at least one internship day per week. Hybrid placements are limited and not guaranteed.

General Criteria Used in the Selection of Agencies

The recruitment and approval of agencies is a critical component of the Practicum Education Program. It is the responsibility of Practicum Education Program administrators to determine an agency's capacity to meet the educational policies and accreditation standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and support student learning.

- In accordance with CSWE standards, agencies must provide learning experiences at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice (individuals, groups, organizations, and communities). Agency missions should focus on serving economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities and demonstrate a commitment to training social workers.
- Agencies must comply with Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and ensure that no individual is excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination in any program or activity based on race, color, or national origin.

- Agency philosophy, goals, programs, and policies must align with professional social work standards, including adherence to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, and be consistent with MSW Program educational objectives.
- Approved agencies must provide in-person internship opportunities for student engagement with clients and constituencies.
- Private practice settings do not meet CSWE accreditation standards or California Board of Behavioral Sciences requirements and are not approved internship sites.
- Hybrid agencies must require a minimum of one in-person (8-hour) internship day per week (i.e., during regular business hours Monday – Friday); such placements are limited and not guaranteed.
- Agencies must maintain a learning environment free from discrimination and harassment (refer to MSW and/or University policies).
- Agencies must be in good standing within the community.
- Agencies must demonstrate commitment to the Practicum Education Program, including its goals, objectives, and due process protections for students.
- Agencies are expected to support staff availability for effective practicum instruction and professional learning, including participation in MSW Program orientation, instructor training, and liaison visits. Students must receive a minimum of one (1) hour of weekly practicum instruction.
- Agencies are expected to provide a range of assignments appropriate to the student's educational needs, including exposure to diverse populations and practice modalities.
- Agencies must provide appropriate space for confidential client services.
- Agencies must sign a Memorandum of Agreement with California State University, Northridge prior to the start of the internship.

Criteria for Selection of Practicum Education Instructors

- Practicum Education Instructors must hold an MSW degree from an accredited social work program and have a minimum of two years of post-MSW experience.
- Practicum Education Instructors working with advanced generalist-year students may hold LCSW licensure, when applicable.
- Practicum Education Instructors are expected to demonstrate commitment to the teaching role in practicum education.
- Practicum Education Instructors are expected to have the interest and availability to fulfill teaching responsibilities.

Requirements for Practicum Education Instructors

- Completion of a Practicum Education Instructor Information Form
- Submission of a current résumé, including:
 - Educational background
 - LCSW license number (if applicable)
 - At least two years of relevant work experience, including job titles, agency names, duration of employment, and responsibilities

- Completion of Practicum Education Instructor Certification Training (one-time, eight-hour training offered by CSUN or an approved Southern California MSW program)

The Practicum Education administrative team reviews all Practicum Education Instructor materials to ensure compliance with these requirements.

Roles of the Student, Practicum Education Instructor (PEI), and Practicum Education Liaison (PEL)

Student

- Follow MSW Practicum Education and agency guidelines for placement
- Complete and sign the Department Student Handbook and Practicum Education Manual Acknowledgement Survey each academic year
- Maintain punctuality for placement, practicum instruction, and seminar
- Adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics
- Complete all assignments on time
- Be open to receiving and integrating constructive feedback
- Demonstrate initiative in identifying learning needs and seeking support
- Adhere to agency standards and practices
- Communicate concerns, issues, or questions promptly with the Practicum Education Instructor and/or Liaison
- Complete and submit Educationally Based Recordings (EBRs) on time

Practicum Education Instructor

- Develop and oversee the student's educational plan in collaboration with the Practicum Education Liaison
- Orient the student to the agency and the community served
- Provide consistent, weekly individual supervision, including case review, policy guidance, and performance evaluation
- Support integration of classroom learning with practicum experience
- Facilitate participation in agency meetings and learning opportunities
- Ensure access to necessary resources (e.g., workspace, materials, case assignments)
- Maintain regular communication with the Practicum Education Liaison
- Structure caseloads and responsibilities to support student learning and growth
- Facilitate group supervision when applicable
- Assist in the development of the Learning Agreement aligned with CSWE competencies
- Review and provide timely feedback on Educationally Based Recordings
- Continuously evaluate student performance and support professional development
- Promote student self-awareness
- Complete mid-semester and final evaluations and review them with the student
- Support the termination process at the conclusion of placement

Practicum Education Liaison

The Practicum Education Liaison is a member of the Practicum Education faculty responsible for monitoring, supporting, and evaluating the practicum education experience to encourage student learning and professional development.

- Monitoring student progress through liaison visits, feedback from instructors and students, and faculty consultation
- Supporting development of Learning Agreements to align with program competencies and student goals
- Enhancing student learning through coordination of presentations, provision of resources, and referrals
- Serve as a liaison between the student and Practicum Education Instructor to address concerns that may impact the learning process and to facilitate problem-solving
- Mediate conflicts within the practicum education agency
- Evaluate and assign student grades based on Practicum Education Instructor evaluations and the Liaison's assessment of student performance.

Internship Placement Process

Internship placement decisions are made by the Practicum Education Administrative team.

Students may not pursue their own internship sites and should not contact an agency prior to referrals made by the Practicum Education Administration team. Every effort is made to secure a broad range of experiences for student learning which encompasses the micro-mezzo-macro practice continuum. Each internship assignment is for an entire academic year.

The Practicum Education Program attempts to place students at sites that are within a 90-minute commute from their place of residence. Students living in remote areas (smaller cities and/or counties) will have a different internship placement process. These students will:

1. More than likely have extended travel time to the internship site
2. Have limited internship options
3. More than likely have limited internship choices in their second-year placement process

Students with prior or current legal convictions (felonies, misdemeanors, DUIs, child endangerment, etc.), past or current positive drug screens, and points on driving records may have limited internship agency options, may require a longer timeframe to secure an internship placement, and/or may exceed more than a 90-minute travel time. Many agencies may not accept interns with felony backgrounds, past or current positive drug screen, and/or points on driving records. This may impact the student's ability to secure an internship and complete the MSW program.

Students are strongly encouraged to have access to reliable and readily available transportation (e.g.: car, public transportation, rideshare service) to meet practicum internship expectations. Students are strongly recommended to have a current driver's license, working car, and car insurance, as this may be a requirement of the agency. Those students who do not have access to their own transportation will have fewer internship options available to them.

The agency is responsible for providing authorization and appropriate orientation for interns who may transport clients, as well as clear information regarding insurance coverage. Students must consult with their Practicum Education Instructor to confirm authorization, insurance coverage, and any required clearances prior to transporting clients. California State University, Northridge does not manage or assume responsibility for transportation or driving requirements associated with the social work practicum education internship and does not provide insurance coverage for students who drive as part of their internship responsibilities.

Generalist Year Placement/Matching Procedure

The CSUN MSW Practicum Education Program maintains full responsibility for the internship placement of all generalist-year students. Incoming generalist-year students are required to complete and sign (in IPT) the MSW Practicum Education Application and the MSW Practicum Education Program Acknowledgment Form. Internship assignments are made by the Assistant Director of Practicum Education. Students are instructed to schedule an interview with their assigned agency prior to the start of the internship. Upon agency acceptance, the internship placement is confirmed with the student for the academic year. If concerns regarding the student-agency match are identified during the initial interview, the Assistant Director of Practicum Education will notify the student, provide feedback, and identify an alternative agency for interview. While students may have specific areas of interest within social work practice, the Practicum Education Program determines the most appropriate placement for generalist year students. Requests for placement changes based solely on personal interest will not be considered.

Advanced Generalist (Specialized) Year Placement/Matching Procedure

Placement procedures differ in the advanced generalist (specialized) year. In contrast to the generalist year, students take a more active role in the practicum internship process. Depending on the cohort, students may select up to three agencies from a list of approved advanced generalist internship placements to explore and interview with. Final placement decisions are made by the Director of Practicum Education based on multiple factors, including student feedback, agency feedback, information from the student's practicum education application, the student's educational needs and goals, and the Director's professional judgment regarding the suitability of the practicum instructor and agency to meet those needs. Active participation from both students and agencies is required throughout the specialized year placement process. If concerns regarding the student-agency match arise at any point, the Assistant Director of Practicum Education will promptly contact the student and/or agency to gather additional feedback. The Assistant Director will then meet with the student and/or agency to discuss the concerns. Determinations regarding

next steps, including additional interviews, will be made on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the Director of Practicum Education.

Preparation for Advanced Generalist (Specialized) Year

A 2nd Year Placement Process Orientation will be conducted in late Fall to prepare students for their advanced generalist specialized internship. During the specialized year of the practicum education placement process, students must follow the 2nd Year Placement Process timeline (timeline made available to students late into the 1st semester of their internship. Information sessions will be held to provide students with specific areas of interest in school social work, geriatric social work, and public child welfare. An open forum session with the Practicum Education Administrative team will be offered to answer student questions prior to the agency selection process. All students are required to complete a specialized-year MSW Practicum Education Application.

The specialized-year practicum placement process includes the students selecting 3 agencies consistent with the student's area of interest or learning strategy for their 2nd year learning experience. Specialized-year practicum placements are identified from a group of approved agencies and include interviews. The advanced generalist-year interview process begins in the spring semester of the generalist year.

Students who are denied by their three agency choices, will be given an opportunity to interview with a fourth agency. If student is not matched with the 4th agency, the student must wait until the next academic year to complete the 2nd year internship placement process. This means they will not be able to start their 2nd year coursework until successfully matched through the 2nd year placement process. This will delay the graduation date.

Students who fall into either of the following categories must repeat the second-year placement process:

1. Students who are unable to secure a second-year internship placement after interviewing with and being considered by the three to four student-selected agencies; or
2. Students who have been terminated from a second-year internship placement during the academic year;

If, after repeating the 2nd year placement process for the second time and the student is unable to secure an internship placement match, the student will be ineligible to continue matriculation in the MSW Program. In such cases, the Director and Assistant Director of Practicum Education, in consultation with the Department Chair, will review, evaluate, and determine the student's status in the program.

If during the interview period an agency is no longer viable and unable to host students for the upcoming academic year, the student will be allowed to interview with a different agency to ensure the opportunity to interview with 3 agencies.

General Steps for Securing a Practicum Placement

- Student completes and submits the generalist year and advanced generalist year Practicum Education Application per the direction of the Practicum Education Program. Failure to submit a completed application may delay the student's ability to secure an internship for the academic year.
- Advanced year students must complete the second-year placement process.
- If student has difficulty meeting Practicum Education requirements and adhering to the Practicum Education internship schedule, the student will not be allowed to continue in the MSW program.
- Students in the 3-year campus-based program can defer the internship for one (1) year.
- The student will prepare, at minimum, a one-page resume for their interviews. A specific form is provided for specialized-year students.
- The agency and/or Practicum Education Instructor will provide feedback to the Practicum Education Program as to whether a student will be accepted or not by their particular agency.
- The Practicum Education Program makes the final decision of matching and informs the student and agency.
- The student is required to attend all Practicum Education internship orientations and meetings.
- The Practicum Education Instructor will attend the CSUN Practicum Education Instructor Certification Training (if applicable).
- The agency Preceptor may attend a Preceptor Training

Declining a Secured Practicum Education Internship

During the generalist and advanced year of the practicum education placement process, students are not allowed to decline being placed at any assigned or matched agency. Failure to accept a placement, will impact the student's status in the program.

Failure to Complete the Second-Year Placement Process

Students who do not successfully complete the second-year placement process, including communicating with agencies, attending required interviews, and securing an approved second-year internship placement, will be required to stop all coursework and their progression in the MSW program.

Students must return in the fall semester of the following academic year to complete required fall coursework (all MSW classes), including Practicum Education courses and internship requirements.

Inability to Secure a Practicum Education Internship

Generalist Year Students

During the generalist-year practicum education placement process, students who are not accepted by two different agencies will be required to wait until the next internship placement cycle. As a result, these students will not be able to begin the MSW program as scheduled and must reapply for admission.

Practicum Education Course and Agency Evaluations

Practicum Education Course Evaluation

The course evaluation process is conducted at the end of every semester by the student as required by the MSW Department and University. The evaluations provide the MSW Department Chair with valuable information to share with the Practicum Education Administrative team. This information offers critical and constructive feedback to Practicum Education Liaisons to support their growth and development as it relates to teaching and liaising.

Practicum Education Agency Evaluation

The students and the Practicum Education Liaisons complete an evaluation of the internship agency and the Practicum Education Instructor annually. This evaluation provides feedback to the Practicum Education Administrative team related to the agency's strengths and areas for improvement.

General Practicum Education Policies

Meeting CSWE standards, the Practicum Education Program places a strong emphasis on offering each student two distinct internship opportunities (private, nonprofit, or public) during the required two years of internship of the MSW program. The purpose of this approach is to further expand the student's knowledge to maximize their learning opportunities in the CSUN MSW Program.

All practicum education seminar sections of SWRK 522/523 and SWRK 622/623 are assigned by the Practicum Education Administrative team. Different than other academic courses, students are assigned into these sections with consideration of several factors, including balancing the class size to support students' learning process, variability of internship client demographic and experiences, as well as geographical location of internship site. Due to the forementioned factors, students may not request a section change. Under few and rare circumstances if students are experiencing challenges in their practicum education seminar, it is within the purview of the Practicum Education Administrative team to consider a change if deemed appropriate. Otherwise, all students will remain in their assigned practicum sections for the entirety of the academic year.

Students are expected to complete all required prerequisites by the University, Department of Social Work, and agency prior to beginning the internship (for example: fingerprinting/criminal background checks, TB test and written verification of test status and clearance, current

Immunization Record, etc.). CSUN MSW Practicum Education Program makes every effort to have agencies incur the costs of above requirements; however, in many situations the student may need to pay for certain items. **If a student fails any of the screenings listed above, they will not be confirmed at the internship agency and this will delay their start in the program, prohibit their ability to secure a generalist or advanced generalist (specialized) internship and prevent their matriculation through the MSW program.**

Students with prior convictions (felonies, misdemeanors, DUIs, child endangerment, elder abuse, domestic violence, etc.), are required to document this information on the MSW Practicum Education Application to inform the Practicum Education Administrative team of such convictions. Individuals with prior convictions may not be able to secure an internship. Students misrepresenting information to the MSW Program and/or on MSW Practicum Education Application may prevent the student from securing a generalist or advanced generalist (specialized) placement, therefore, delaying the student's matriculation through the program.

Students completing the internship requirements must abide by the following as stated in the University's Memorandum of Agreement with all Practicum Education Agencies:

- Procuring and maintaining in force health insurance coverage throughout the term of the student's clinical practicum at the Clinical Site.
- Evidence of such insurance must be provided to the Practicum Site prior to the start of each student's clinical rotation upon request.

Students are representatives of the agency and are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner, as well as adhere to the policies and regulations of the agency. Students must demonstrate professionalism (e.g., follow agency dress code, appropriate written and oral communication with agency staff), appropriate behavior (e.g., timeliness with attendance and paperwork, collegiality with agency staff and other interns), and follow the chain of communication when dealing with conflict. The student will be evaluated on their ability to professionally communicate with others. Students are not to perform duties outside of their scope of practice. All students are required to represent themselves to clients, staff, and community professionals as a "MSW Student Intern".

Students are required to remain in their internship for the duration of the academic year, unless otherwise approved by the practicum education administrative team.

Students are not permitted to secure an internship at a location where they have previously worked and/or volunteered without prior approval by the Practicum Education Administrative team. Students are to disclose previous paid and volunteer work experience in the MSW Practicum Education Application.

Employment-Based Internships

A student must request and receive approval to utilize their place of employment as an internship during the advanced generalist (specialized) year. The student must provide the Practicum Education Administrative team with Employment-Based Internship Request Form,

copy of current job description and a copy of proposed internship role, tasks and responsibilities. Applications for Employment-Based Internships are due by January 31st, unless otherwise stated. The Employment-Based Internship Request Form must be signed by the current employment supervisor and the proposed Practicum Education Instructor (must be a MSW, who is not the employment supervisor), before submitting to the CSUN Assistant Director of Practicum Education. If the Employment-Based Internship is approved, there is an agreement that:

- The responsibilities that the CSUN MSW intern performs during their employment hours are different from their learning opportunities as a MSW intern
- The practicum education instruction is provided by someone not currently supervising their employment responsibilities
- The MSW intern/employee schedule is set so that the internship hours do not overlap with their employment hours.
- In the event of a voluntary or involuntary leave from place of employment, the student may not be eligible to continue with the internship.

Paid or Stipend Internships

The CSUN Department of Social Work MSW Practicum Education Program model is based on the NASW guiding principle of service. Through social work internship experiences, students are introduced to how service is grounded in the social work profession. Additionally, the purpose and focus of the internship is to meet the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE) Education Policies and Accreditation Standards.

The Practicum Education Program actively encourages agencies to provide stipends for MSW interns. The Practicum Education team consistently seeks funding sources to support stipends for students. However, not all agencies are in a financial position to provide a stipend. Information on any available stipends will be sent to eligible students. Additional private stipends may be available depending on funding and the individual needs of the agency. Learning expectations for students receiving a stipend, or not, remain the same.

The student's role in the agency is not of an employee, but of a student intern. The CSUN Practicum Education Program strongly believes that expectations related to a student's productivity not be evaluated the same as an employee. The student's assignments must be aligned with the nine (9) CSWE competencies, therefore, educationally focused. If the agency hires the student(s) as an at-will employee and provides benefits, this does not meet CSUN MSW Program internship guidelines. The exception would be an employment-based internship.

[Please see CSWE's position statement on paid placements.](#)

Conflict of Interest Policy for Practicum Internships

Students must inform the Practicum Education Program of any personal relationship student may have with individuals associated with potential or assigned internship. For example, agencies employing significant others, spouses, parents, relatives, or other close personal acquaintances. Such a relationship, combined with the power and responsibility of practicum education instructing or coordinating internships and making determinations regarding evaluations, is a conflict of interest. For more information or questions, please consult the Assistant Director of Practicum Education of your cohort.

PPSC/CWA Policy

CSUN Department of Social Work program is not state qualified to issue the Pupil Personal Services Credential (PPSC) or the Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA). CSUN students pursuing the PPSC /CWA must apply to a post PPSC/CWA program upon earning the MSW degree. CSUN MSW program is based on a cohort model, therefore, students placed in a school setting in their generalist/first year of practicum are not eligible to collect practicum hours toward the PPSC/CWA. Only students placed in a school setting in their advanced/second year of internship are eligible to pursue the PPSC/CWA. The hour requirement for the PPSC/CWA is 600 hours for students in all cohorts. Hours need to be completed by the date spring semester of the advanced year of internship grades are due. Students must clear all required PPSC/CWA clearances. Students must be cleared and approved by the California's Commission on Teacher Credentialing prior to starting their internship. Information regarding these clearances will be distributed in a timely manner to successfully support the student meeting the PPSC/CWA requirements.

The Practicum Education Instructors for the PPSC/CWA must possess a current California PPSC and CWA social work credentials.

Jury Duty

The CSUN MSW Practicum Education Program strongly encourages students to postpone Jury Duty until the semester ends. If the student must adhere to the Jury Duty summons and must report to jury duty on internship days, internship hours will be honored, up to 8 hours per internship day and not to exceed their weekly scheduled internship hours as designated by their cohort. **The Practicum Education Program will honor a maximum of two weeks of internship hours based on the cohort internship hour requirements.** Students called to serve beyond two weeks of service will need to provide the Practicum Education Liaison with documentation of the additional length of time requested for jury duty. The Practicum Education Liaison will collaborate with the student and agency Practicum Education Instructor to create a plan to make up the internship hours.

Practicum Education Program Strike Procedure

The Practicum Education Program procedure regarding student internship and strikes/work actions is based on principles of educational integrity, and focuses on how educational

expectations, goals and objectives can be met and maintained. The interest of the students' educational experience rather than the merits of any given strike or work action is of primary consideration. It is the Program's belief that a strike bound agency cannot provide a climate conducive to a sound educational experience.

If an agency is in a bona fide strike situation prior to the beginning of the internship period, the Practicum Education team will assess and monitor the longevity of the strike and will determine if this agency will be able to provide a viable learning experience for the academic year. If the agency reaches resolution of the strike situation at some point during the academic year, the agency may be used for a mid-year placement depending on re-assessment of the agency and its ability to meet the learning and educational expectations of the department

If a strike or work action situation occurs in an agency where students are in placement during the academic year, these options may be considered:

1. The student is encouraged to seriously consider their stance relative to participation or non-participation and may request not to remain in the placement agency during the period of the strike or work action. The student will be supported in this decision by the program and their right to self-determination will be respected. To fulfill class requirements and CSWE competencies, any internship hours missed during the strike period will need to be made up by the student during the regular semester, break periods, or in an extended placement through May/June of the academic year. A plan for missed hours make up will be developed by the student's Practicum Education Liaison in consultation with the Director of Practicum Education, the student, and the practicum education instructor. The student should note any impact this action could have on the agency and clients and ensure to the best of their ability that they communicate with their Practicum Education Instructor and Practicum Education Liaison to mitigate this impact.
2. The student may request to remain in the placement setting during the period of strike or work action. This option will be available **only** when the Practicum Education Program can be sure that the educational integrity of the internship can be maintained. This means that the practicum education instruction requirements, caseload requirements, and other expectations of internship can be consistently met by the agency during the strike or work action period and that there is no danger (academic or physical safety) to the student. Students wishing to remain in the agency must discuss this plan with the Practicum Education Liaison who will verify the agency's ability to provide appropriate practicum education instruction and educational experiences. The student will be supported in this decision.
3. The student should remain aware that in supporting or not supporting any action, they are considered a representative of the CSUN MSW Program and of the larger CSUN campus community. Students need to represent themselves in a professional manner that is reflective of their views and recognizes their role as a member of the CSUN community.

If a strike or work action continues beyond a three-week period, a reassessment of the ability of the agency to provide the appropriate practicum education instruction and educational experiences will be made by the Practicum Education team. If the agency is found to be unable to meet the educational requirements of the practicum education program, the student may be relocated to another agency site until the strike or work action have been resolved, and/or until the agency is able to provide the appropriate educational activities; or the student may be replaced.

It is the responsibility of the practicum education program to support students who are confronted with a potential or actual strike situation to assist the student in developing a clear understanding of the relevant issues regarding the strike, and an understanding of the implications of the strike for the student's practicum education experience. Issues around responsibility to clients during strike situations will also be discussed in practicum education class and/or in scheduled meetings with students.

Problem Resolution, Grievances, Practicum Failure, Termination

General Practicum Education Problem Resolution Process

When conflict occurs in the practicum internship setting, all parties are encouraged to try and resolve the matter at the lowest level of authority prior to elevating the matter. If one or both parties feel that they have tried to resolve the matter but there still is not resolution, then the Practicum Education Liaison and the Practicum Education Instructor (if they are not one of the two original parties in the conflict) should be involved. A meeting should occur between the Practicum Education Instructor, Practicum Education Liaison, and student to address the current problem.

Concerns or Conflicts Regarding Practicum Education

The student has the right to express disagreement or displeasure in a professional manner related to practicum site, Practicum Education Instructor, or their student evaluation. Per the NASW Code of Ethics, the student should first professionally discuss disagreement or concern with the individual with whom they have a disagreement. If this method does not resolve the matter, then the student should proceed through the Practicum Education administrative chain of communication.

1. Practicum Education Liaison Faculty
2. Assistant Director of Practicum Education
3. Director of Practicum Education
4. Associate Department Chair
5. Department Chair

If the conflict is not resolved after going through the administrative chain of communication, a decision will be made by the Social Work Department Administrative team.

Practicum Problems as a Result of Student Performance Issues

If student does not meet expectations and/or is in violation(s) of the NASW Code of Ethics, the Practicum Education Instructor will notify the Practicum Education Liaison. The Practicum Education Instructor and Practicum Education Liaison will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss concerns and if necessary, a Student Support Plan will be developed. If the problem is not resolved, the Practicum Education Liaison will notify the Assistant Director of Practicum Education of the ongoing issue(s) including a written summary with a more stringent corrective action plan that will be shared with the student. If the student fails to meet expectations of the corrective action plan, then the student will meet with the Practicum Education Liaison and Assistant Director of Practicum Education to discuss the issue(s) and inform as to what action should be taken at that time. Any student performance issues will be reflected in the student's semester evaluation.

NOTE: The student should be aware that they will not be allowed to change their practicum site until they have met with their Practicum Education Liaison and Assistant Director of Practicum Education to address and successfully resolve the issues identified as barriers in the practicum site. If the present issues cannot be resolved, to respect the student's due process, the Practicum Education Liaison will seek consultation with the Assistant Director of Practicum Education. A decision to replace a student is left to the discretion of the Assistant Director of Practicum Education in consultation with the Director of Practicum Education. The Practicum Education Program will credit the student full hours up until the point of transition from one agency to the next.

Practicum Education Performance Problems Due to Student Personal Issues

If the practicum education problem is a result of personal problems, conflict, and/or challenges that the student is experiencing (e.g. crisis, illness, death in the family, etc.), it is expected that the student will keep the Practicum Education Instructor and Practicum Education Liaison apprised of the situation on an ongoing basis. All parties involved should follow [General Practicum Education Problem Resolution Process](#) of this manual. If these personal problems continue, or negatively impact the clients, agency, or student's ability to meet their social work internship obligations or expectations due to absences or ability to competently perform social work functions, then the student may have a premature termination from the internship.

In certain circumstances, the student may request a leave of absence from the Chair of the Department or the Director of Online/Offsite Programs. For students returning after a leave of absence, the student will need to reapply for Practicum Education, and a new internship will need to be secured for the student. Students may need to complete additional internship hours beyond the minimum requirement to ensure an optimal learning experience regardless of how many internship hours the student previously completed. The number of hours required will be determined by the Director of Practicum Education. To confirm: Students may need to repeat internship hours regardless of how many internship hours the student previously completed

prior to the leave of absence.

Formal Academic Warning Process for Failure to Make Progress in Practicum Education

An academic warning is a formal notice from a school or university informing a student that their academic performance has fallen below the institution's minimum standards and meant as an early alert so the student can improve before facing stronger consequences.

Specific actions, behaviors, or events that would constitute unsatisfactory progress, such as but not limited to the following:

- Failure to complete number of required practicum hours within the semester
- Excessive absences from the placement agency or failure to meet with Practicum Education Instructor and/or Preceptor on a weekly basis for practicum education instruction
- Failure to comply with agency policy and procedure
- Failure to respond to requests made by Practicum Education Liaison, Director of Practicum Education, and Practicum Education Instructor
- NOTE Consequences of failing to respond to any communication attempts (phone, e-mail, and/or letter) may result in the student meeting with the Assistant Director and Director of Practicum Education.
- Failure to present oneself in a professional manner when interacting with clients, peers, faculty and agency personnel
- Failure to complete assignments (including EBRs, journals, learning agreements and practicum education calendars)
- Excessive self-disclosure of personal information which has a harmful effect on clients
- Abandonment of Practicum site
- Students are not allowed to make any changes in their Practicum site without the approval of the Practicum Education Administrative team. Students may not render a "resignation" or abandon their placement
- Refusal to collaborate and interact with the assigned Practicum Education Instructor

Academic Warning Procedure

Consistent with the standards of the Council on Social Work Education, the MSW Program is committed to supporting student success while ensuring that all students demonstrate the competencies required for professional social work practice. When a student's academic or practicum performance falls below program expectations, an Academic Warning may be issued. The purpose of the Academic Warning process is to identify areas of concern, provide structured support, and establish clear expectations for improvement.

Step 1: Initial Meeting

The student will meet with the Practicum Education Liaison and Practicum Education Instructor

to review and discuss the identified academic and/or Practicum Education deficiencies. The purpose of this meeting is to clarify the concerns, review program expectations, and discuss the factors contributing to the student's performance difficulties. The meeting will also provide an opportunity for the student to ask questions and identify potential supports.

Step 2: Development of a Remediation Plan

Following the initial meeting, the Practicum Education Liaison, in collaboration with the student and when appropriate the Practicum Education Instructor will develop a written remediation plan (Student Support Plan). The Student Support Plan will outline specific areas requiring improvement, measurable expectations, recommended supports or resources, and a timeline for demonstrating progress.

Step 3: Documentation and Notification

The Academic Warning and remediation plan (SSP) will be documented in writing and provided to the student. The documentation will specify the conditions that must be met to return to good academic standing, the timeline for review, and potential consequences if the expectations are not met. Practicum Education Administration will be notified.

Step 4: Monitoring and Follow-Up

The Practicum Education Liaison will monitor the student's progress throughout the remediation period. The student may be required to participate in follow-up meetings to review progress toward the goals outlined in the remediation plan. Adjustments to the SSP may be made if deemed appropriate to support the student's development and competency attainment.

Step 5: Outcome Determination

At the conclusion of the remediation period, the Practicum Education Liaison will evaluate the student's progress in consultation with the Practicum Education Administrative team. If the student has met the expectations outlined in the remediation plan, the Academic Warning may be lifted. If sufficient progress has not been demonstrated, additional action may be taken, which may include continued remediation, and the student may be in jeopardy of not passing the Practicum Education courses. If the outcome of the remediation plan is not met, the student will receive in writing the decision regarding their final grade in the course from the Practicum Education Liaison.

Students who wish to appeal the Practicum Education final grades should review [CSUN's grade grievance](#).

Practicum Education Safety Guidelines and Protocols

To promote student safety and enhance students' skills and knowledge in effectively managing challenging situations, it is essential that students understand the policies, procedures, and expectations related to safety established by their practicum education internship agency and CSUN.

Critical Incidents at Internship Site

If an incident involving a physical or psychological injury to a student occurs, the student, Practicum Education Instructor, or an agency representative should contact the Practicum Education Liaison immediately. A discussion will occur regarding the incident, what the current status of the situation is, and what the desired outcomes are of the agency, Practicum Education Instructor, and student. Both the Practicum Education Instructor and Practicum Education Liaison will document the incident and plan and bring to the attention of the Assistant Director of Practicum Education. The Practicum Education Liaison will contact the student and assess the student's safety and mental well-being, as well as determine if and when the student can return to their placement. In consultation with the Practicum Education Administrative team, it will be determined if the student will need to be removed from that placement.

Student Privacy/Confidentiality Waiver

All information related to the student placement and performance in an agency is neither private nor confidential, even if the student is in an employment-based practicum setting. Practicum Education Instructors are considered co-educators for the students' Practicum Education courses and thereby expected to receive and share information regarding professional behavior and learning progress at the internship with the CSUN MSW Practicum Education team.

Accommodation Requests for Practicum Education Courses (Seminar and Internships)

Students needing program accommodations or modifications while matriculating through the MSW program have equitable access to [CSUN's Disability Resources and Educational Services \(DRES\)](#).

Before accommodations can be made for practicum education seminar and/or internship, students must contact CSUN DRES to request accommodation support services. CSUN faculty and internship agency/Practicum Education Instructor cannot make any accommodations for students without formal notification from DRES that outlines approved, specific accommodations and modifications to their MSW program.

Title IX Protected Status

Students who feel that they need support or consultation regarding a protected status while in the program (classroom or at a Practicum Education internship placement) must contact the [Office of Equity and Compliance](#).

The CSU prohibits the following conduct, as defined in section V.A and B:

1. Discrimination based on any Protected Status, including Age, Disability (physical and

mental), Gender, Gender Identity (including Nonbinary or Transgender), Gender Expression, Genetic Information, Marital Status, Medical Condition, Nationality, Pregnancy or related conditions, Race or Ethnicity (including color, caste, or ancestry), Religion or Religious Creed, Sex (including Sex Stereotyping or Sex Characteristics), Sexual Orientation, and Veteran or Military Status.

Zero-tolerance for Harassment

Harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Any student believing to be harassed at their practicum internship placement should report incident(s) to their Practicum Education Instructor, Practicum Education Liaison, Practicum Education Administrative team, and the Office of Equity and Compliance. Refer to the above [section VII](#) of the Student Handbook. Substantiated charges of harassment by a student may result in dismissal from the program. See [Sexual Harassment in the manual](#) regarding University and Department harassment policies and procedures.