



MSW Student Handbook & Field Education Manual

2025-2026

Welcome!

Attending graduate school is a big decision. We are thrilled that you chose the PennWest Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. As a program, we are committed to providing engaging, challenging, and relevant educational experiences and to supporting your learning and success.

The MSW Student Handbook and Field Education Manual were developed to serve as useful guides to MSW Program policies and procedures. You will also want to familiarize yourself with the general graduate program policies on the [Academic Policies page](#). Policy manuals and handbooks are not substitutes for sound guidance. We encourage you to reach out to us as needed with questions and concerns.

We look forward to working with you to achieve your personal and professional goals.

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For additional support or inquiries regarding your academic journey, the following contacts are available to assist you. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions related to the Social Work program or field education.

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SECTION ONE: MSW HANDBOOK

SECTION ONE

PennWest MSW Student Handbook

History, Mission, and Objectives

History

On July 1, 2022, California University of PA, Clarion University, and Edinboro University integrated to form the new Pennsylvania Western University (PennWest for short). PennWest is one of the institutions in the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE) and Western Pennsylvania's second largest university.

The PennWest Master of Social Work (MSW) Program is a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program in the Department of Social Work, Sociology, and Human Services which is part of the College of Health Sciences and Human Services.

The MSW Program is a 100% asynchronous online program which welcomes students across the globe. Prior to becoming a fully online MSW program, classes were offered at both the Edinboro and California campuses. Both campuses were established in the mid-nineteenth century as normal schools. They became teacher's colleges and then state colleges prior to both becoming part of PASSHE in 1983.

Mission

Through our teaching, research, and service, MSW faculty and staff strive to deliver an accessible, innovative, student-focused curriculum that embodies trauma informed principles, centers diversity and social justice, values service, and models professionalism for the purpose of preparing ethical, competent, self-regulating MSW graduates who possess the requisite knowledge, skills, values, cognitive and affective processes to:

- Understand ways in which humans experience both harm and healing through relationships.
- Engage in ethical practice that values the dignity and worth of all persons and promotes the wellbeing of individuals, families, organizations, and communities.
- Utilize an equity lens that recognizes the interconnectedness of local and global communities and the intersectionality of diversity, trauma, and policy practice.
- Advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.
- Respond professionally, creatively, collaboratively, and with integrity to the increasingly complex matrix of human needs and strengths in a changing society.
- Become trauma-informed leaders in agencies and communities.
- Apply and contribute to trauma-informed, evidence-based research and practice to advance the social work profession.
- Empower individuals, families, organizations, and communities to engage in purposeful action locally and globally to enhance quality of life and eliminate poverty.

Communication

General questions and inquiries about the MSW Program should be directed to MSWProgram@pennwest.edu.

Faculty and Staff

A list of email addresses for current full-time MSW Program faculty and staff can be found in [Appendix A](#).

Communication Information and Reminders

Below are some email reminders and best practices for professional communication.

- **Check your PennWest email account frequently.** It is the official means of communication between students and all university departments, faculty, and staff.
- Check your spam folder regularly. Sometimes messages get filtered to spam even from regular contacts.
- Use your PennWest email address to contact faculty and staff. This is the fastest and most efficient medium for communication. Do not use a personal email address as it may go to spam, get auto deleted, or may be inappropriate for sensitive content due to FERPA laws.
- Provide a concise, meaningful email subject.
- Use professional communication skills and address your recipient with respect and courtesy.
- Sign your name or use an email signature that includes your name and pronouns.
- Faculty and staff are expected to reply within 48 business hours. If you do not receive a response within a reasonable time, follow up with the faculty or staff member. If you still do not get a response, contact the MSW Program Director, Assistant MSW Program Director, or Department Chair for assistance.
- Links to information about setting up university email accounts can be found on the [Information Technology Services website](#).

Who To Contact about MSW Program Questions

The table below provides contact information for common MSW student questions and concerns. An additional contact list for students with concerns specific to their field placement is included in the [“Who to Contact about MSW Field Questions”](#) in Section Two: MSW Field Education Manual.

For/About	Contact	Email or Link
Classes, plans of study, registration, referrals, professional goals, supports	Academic Advisor	Listed in your My.PennWest.edu portal
General Field & Experiential Learning Cloud (formerly Tevera) Questions	MSW Field Office	MSWFieldOffice@pennwest.edu
Courses you need that are full	Academic Advisor or MSW Program Director	MSWProgram@pennwest.edu
Course substitution forms	Academic Advisor or MSW Program Director	MSWProgram@pennwest.edu
Transfer credit questions	MSW Program Director	MSWProgram@pennwest.edu
Education verification forms	MSW Program Director	MSWProgram@pennwest.edu
Grade concerns	Contact your instructor first and then reach out to the MSW Program Director or Department Chair if needed	Instructor email in your course syllabus
Other MSW Program related questions or concerns	Academic Advisor, MSW Program Director	MSWProgram@pennwest.edu 724-938-5349
Peer Support	SWAGS Facebook Group, social forums in your classes, online social events	SWAGS Facebook Group
Transcripts	Registrar’s Office	Transcript Order Website
Registration help	Academic Advisor or Registrar’s Office	Registrar@pennwest.edu
Financial Aid	Financial Aid Office	financialaid@pennwest.edu 814-732-3500
Email, password, other tech problems	IT Services Help Desk	ITS Website 814-732-2111 or use link in the My.PennWest.edu portal

Admissions

MSW Program Modality

All MSW classes are delivered in a 100% asynchronous format. This means there are no specific days or times that students must attend in-person or virtual class sessions. There are also no residency requirements. Students are not required to visit any campus at any time but are welcome to do so. Field internships are completed in the community where the student resides.

MSW Programs

There are two MSW program options to which individuals may apply: the Regular Standing MSW Program and the Advanced Standing MSW Program.

- **Regular Standing MSW Program:** The Regular Standing MSW Program requires the completion of 60 credit hours including concurrent field placement during which students complete a minimum of 900 hours of supervised practice.
- **Advanced Standing MSW Program:** Individuals who have earned a BSW from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited institution within the previous ten years are eligible to apply for the Advanced Standing MSW Program. Credits over ten years old earned at PennWest or elsewhere will not be accepted without a review appropriate program director and department chair and approval of the academic dean. The Advanced Standing MSW Program requires the completion of 33 credit hours. It also requires completion of concurrent field placements during which students complete a minimum of 600 hours of supervised practice.

Application Requirements

MSW program applications are managed through the Slate application system. All MSW applicants are required to submit the following:

- Professional resume
- Bachelor's degree:
 - Regular Standing MSW applicants must provide evidence of an earned baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education that includes a minimum of 21 term hours of credit (or equivalent) distributed within a liberal arts curriculum.
 - Advanced Standing MSW applicants must provide evidence of graduation from a CSWE-accredited BSW program in the past ten years. Applicants with a BSW degree conferred more than ten years prior may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- Official transcript demonstrating a minimum GPA of 3.0. Applicants with a GPA below 3.0 who meet all other requirements may be considered for acceptance on a case-by-case basis.
- Two professional or educational references from individuals who can attest to the applicant's readiness for graduate study and for advanced social work practice. Applicants to the Advanced Standing Program are strongly encouraged to submit references from their undergraduate field educator, faculty, or supervisor.
- A personal statement that addresses the following in 3-4 double-spaced pages:
 - Why you have chosen to enter the social work profession.
 - Your ability to value the perspectives of diverse populations.
 - How your academic, professional, personal, and volunteer experiences have prepared you for graduate studies in social work.
 - Your motivation to apply to the MSW Program at PennWest.

International Applicants

In addition to the application materials outlined above, international students must also submit the following:

- An official bachelors and/or graduate level transcripts or official evaluation of transcripts with a course-by-course evaluation including GPA (WES or Silny preferred). Evaluations from any NACES Member will be accepted.
- Proof of English Proficiency. Any applicant who has earned a bachelor's degree or beyond with English as the medium of instruction will also be exempted from this exam requirement as will any student who is a citizen of one of the countries listed on the [PennWest International](#) website.
- Passport
- Financial Affidavit and supporting documents. The Financial Affidavit is needed for immigration purposes only. It is not mandatory to submit with your application and can be submitted after admission if preferred.

International applicants interested in applying for the Advanced Standing MSW Program must provide evidence of a CASWE-accredited baccalaureate social work degree (from the Canadian social accreditor, recognized through an [MOU](#) with CSWE and CASWE) or an internationally earned [ISWDRES](#)-evaluated degree comparable to a baccalaureate social work degree.

Application Deadlines

Priority deadlines for application to all MSW programs are listed below. Applications received after the deadline may be considered for admission to the current term on a space available basis or offered admission in the next available term if space is not available.

- Fall start application deadline: July 1
- Spring start application deadline: November 1
- Summer start application deadline: May 1

Transfer Credit

Applicants to the Regular Standing MSW program may request to transfer up to 18 equivalent graduate course credits. The program only accepts practice course transfer credits from other CSWE-accredited or candidacy social work programs.

Credits over ten years old earned at PennWest or elsewhere will not be accepted without a review by the appropriate program director and department chair and approval of the academic dean.

Due to accreditation requirements, the MSW Program does not grant social work credit for life experience or previous work experience.

Students can either be admitted to the 33-credit advanced standing due to having a BSW or they can be admitted to the 60-credit regular standing program and transfer in graduate credit from another institution. However, they cannot do both. Since the maximum for transfer is 18 credits and the BSW counts for 27 credits, most students choose advanced standing. Advanced Standing MSW students cannot transfer in graduate credits.

Policies and procedures for transfer of graduate credit can be found in the Graduation Residency Requirement and the Evaluation of Courses Over Ten Years Old policies on the [Academic Policies page](#).

Students seeking to transfer credits should:

- Refer to the transfer credit policies.
- Be prepared to supply transfer course information which may include one or more of the following: course catalog descriptions, course syllabi, objectives, content, learning activities, theoretical frames of reference, bibliographies, texts, and instructor qualifications.

What to Expect after Admission

Upon admission, MSW students will receive a welcome email. Students must confirm their intention to enroll by completing the Decision Reply Form that is linked within the Offer of Admission in the [admissions portal](#). To help plan for participation in the program, students are asked to submit the form as soon as possible.

After admission, all new MSW students will be provided with information and resources to help them get started in the MSW program including:

- a link to the [MSW Handbook and Field Education Manual](#);
- a link to a video with detailed information about getting started in the MSW program;
- a link to register for an upcoming online MSW Orientation session;
- information about their plan of study and registration dates;
- and encouragement to reach out with questions or to set up a phone call or zoom meeting.

Students are expected to check their school email on a regular basis. Important information and communications will be sent to students' school email account, not their personal email account.

Students should contact [Student Accounts](#) or [Financial Aid](#) with any concerns related to finances. They may also want to contact the Financial Aid Office about how Winter and Summer courses are managed in relation to financial aid/loan options.

Curriculum

CSWE has identified nine social work competencies that are essential to generalist social work practice. CSWE also requires MSW Programs to develop specialized competencies that build upon the nine generalist competencies. Full descriptions of the CSWE Generalist Competencies and PennWest Specialized Competencies can be found in [Appendix C](#).

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

The PennWest generalist and specialized curriculum and pedagogy are influenced by and integrate a trauma-informed lens. To be trauma-informed in any context means to understand the widespread prevalence and impact of violence, victimization, and other forms of trauma in our society and to use that understanding to inform service delivery to prevent retraumatization of clients and staff. A trauma-informed approach is congruent with and builds upon the person-in-environment perspective by understanding trauma results from harmful or threatening biopsychosocial experiences that individuals, families, organizations, and communities must navigate, rather than as personal defects or flaws that need fixing. A trauma-informed approach also emphasizes strengths and recognizes that trauma prevention and recovery require intervention at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

In the MSW program, we teach students to understand differences between *trauma-informed care*—an organizational change process built on principles designed to prevent retraumatization and to keep people engaged in services that promote recovery—and *trauma-specific services*—interventions designed to directly treat trauma-related symptoms and syndromes in individuals such as EMDR and exposure therapies. We also teach students to use knowledge of theories of human behavior and the social environment to gather, manage, assess, and translate data from clients to develop trauma-informed intervention goals and objectives that capture strengths, needs, and challenges of diverse clients and constituents.

One of the core principles of trauma-informed care is recognizing the importance of considering Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues. Centering anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion is inherent in a trauma-informed approach. Trauma-informed care also draws upon other theoretical perspectives valued by social workers such as trauma theory, feminist theory, human development theory, attachment theory, disability, and organizational theory. Viewing practice through these lenses encourages relationships and interventions focused on social justice and human rights.

To effectively practice what we teach as social work educators, we integrate trauma and trauma-informed care into the content of the explicit curriculum, and we also strive to engage in ongoing reflection and assessment of our educational policies and practices to prevent retraumatization and promote resilience and growth among students, faculty, and staff.

Regular Standing MSW Program Curriculum

The Regular Standing MSW Program comprises a 60-credit curriculum during which students complete a field placement of 900 hours minimum. Courses prepare students for generalist and specialized trauma-informed social work practice. The curriculum is grounded in a competency-based education framework that recognizes field education as the signature pedagogy, as outlined in [CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS). Regular Standing MSW students complete a total of 17 courses including three advanced practice electives.

The table below summarizes the curriculum requirements for Regular Standing MSW students.

Regular Standing MSW Program Curriculum

Number	Title	Credits
SOWK 6000	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice	3
SOWK 6100	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)	3
SOWK 6200	Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice	3
SOWK 6300	Social Work Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 6400	Social Work Practice with Families and Groups	3
SOWK 6500	Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities	3
SOWK 6600	Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice	3
SOWK 6700	Social Work Research	3
SOWK 6800	Foundation Social Work Field	6
SOWK 7100	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology	3
SOWK 7600	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice	3
SOWK 7700	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 7800	Advanced Social Work Field I	6
SOWK 7810	Advanced Social Work Field II	6
	Total Credits	60

Advanced Standing MSW Program Curriculum

The Advanced Standing MSW Curriculum comprises a 33-credit curriculum during which students complete a field placement of 600 hours minimum. Courses prepare students for advanced generalist and specialized trauma-informed social work practice. The curriculum is grounded in a competency-based education framework that recognizes field education as the signature pedagogy, as outlined in [CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS). Advanced Standing MSW students complete a total of 9 courses including three advanced practice electives.

The table below summarizes the curriculum requirements for Advanced Standing MSW students.

Advanced Standing MSW Program Curriculum

Number	Title	Credits
SOWK 6000	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice	3
SOWK 7100	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology	3
SOWK 7600	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice	3
SOWK 7700	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 75XX	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	3
SOWK 7800	Advanced Social Work Field I	6
SOWK 7810	Advanced Social Work Field II	6
	Total Credits	33

Advanced Practice Electives

Elective courses are offered on a rotating basis. Not all electives are offered each term. Topics for SOWK 7599 rotate also. Students may repeat 7599 once for credit with a different topic. Each of the following elective courses is 3 credits.

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

Field Education

All MSW students should refer to Section Two of this document, the PennWest [MSW Field Education Manual](#) for detailed information, policies, and procedures regarding their field experience.

Plans of Study

The MSW program is a year-round program with classes held in fall, spring, and summer terms.

The Plans of Study in this section outline a sequence in which students should complete courses.

Students should follow the Plan of Study that reflects the MSW program to which they have been admitted (i.e., Advanced Standing or Regular Standing) and the time frame in which they plan to complete the program (i.e., full-time, part-time, fall/spring only).

Making adjustments to your Plan of Study is possible and sometimes necessary. For example, some students may need to complete their field internship in terms that differ from what is outlined. Some students may need to take a term off or change the number of courses taken each term.

Additionally, some students may choose to take electives during Winter session to help them graduate sooner or to reduce the number of courses taken in another term. Winter session courses are held between Fall and Spring terms and are very condensed (3-4 weeks). Enrollment in Winter session courses is optional.

Taking courses in a manner different from what is outlined may result in delays in graduation, especially if there are delays in completing your internship. Please consult with your Academic Advisor or the MSW Program Director if you need assistance adjusting your Plan of Study.

Making changes to the outlined Plan of Study may also present difficulties with qualifying for student loans. Please contact the Financial Aid Office for assistance.

If you are a returning student who enrolled prior to Fall 2022, please refer to the section for [MSW Students Admitted Prior to Fall 2022](#).

Regular Standing MSW Program: Full-Time Plan of Study

FULL-TIME REGULAR STANDING MSW PROGRAM	
TERM 1	
SOWK 6000:	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice
SOWK 6100:	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)
SOWK 6300:	Social Work Practice with Individuals
TERM 2	
SOWK 6200:	Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice
SOWK 6400:	Social Work Practice with Families and Groups
SOWK 6700:	Social Work Research
TERM 3	
SOWK 6500:	Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities
SOWK 6600:	Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 6800:	Foundation Social Work Field (6 credits)
TERM 4	
SOWK 7100:	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology
SOWK 7600:	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 7800:	Advanced Social Work Field I (6 credits)
TERM 5	
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective
SOWK 7700:	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation
SOWK 7810:	Advanced Social Work Field II (6 credits)
TERM 6	
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*

*Two electives may be taken during one or more Winter sessions which could result in graduating one term early. Discuss with your Academic Advisor if you are interested in pursuing this option.

Advanced Practice Electives:

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

Regular Standing MSW Program: Part-Time Plan of Study

PART-TIME REGULAR STANDING MSW PROGRAM	
TERM 1	
SOWK 6000:	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice
SOWK 6100:	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)
TERM 2	
SOWK 6200:	Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice
SOWK 6700:	Social Work Research
TERM 3	
SOWK 6300:	Social Work Practice with Individuals
SOWK 6600:	Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice
TERM 4	
SOWK 6400:	Social Work Practice with Families and Groups
SOWK 6800:	Foundation Social Work Field (6 credits)
TERM 5	
SOWK 7100:	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology
SOWK 6500:	Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities
TERM 6	
SOWK 7600:	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective
TERM 7	
SOWK 7700:	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation
SOWK 7800:	Advanced Social Work Field I (6 credits)
TERM 8	
SOWK 7810:	Advanced Social Work Field II (6 credits)
TERM 9	
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*

*Two electives may be taken during one or more Winter sessions which could result in graduating one term early. Discuss with your Academic Advisor if you are interested in pursuing this option.

Advanced Practice Electives:

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

Regular Standing MSW Program: Fall/Spring Only Plan of Study

This plan of study is most appropriate for CWEL students or students who have other special circumstances that necessitate and support intense full-time study during fall/spring terms only.

REGULAR STANDING MSW PROGRAM FALL/SPRING ONLY	
TERM 1	
SOWK 6000:	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice
SOWK 6100:	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)
SOWK 6300:	Social Work Practice with Individuals
SOWK 6600:	Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 6700:	Social Work Research
TERM 2	
SOWK 6200:	Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice
SOWK 6400:	Social Work Practice with Families and Groups
SOWK 6800:	Foundation Social Work Field (register for 6 credits)
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective
TERM 3	
SOWK 7100:	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology
SOWK 6500:	Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective
SOWK 7800:	Advanced Social Work Field I (register for 6 credits)
TERM 4	
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective
SOWK 7600:	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 7700:	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation
SOWK 7810:	Advanced Social Work Field II (register for 6 credits)

Advanced Practice Electives:

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions*
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders*
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems*
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth*
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

*Advanced practice elective courses that have been approved by CWEL

Advanced Standing MSW Program: Full-Time Plan of Study

FULL-TIME ADVANCED STANDING MSW PROGRAM	
TERM 1	
SOWK 6000:	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*
SOWK 7600:	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice
TERM 2	
SOWK 7100:	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*
SOWK 7800:	Advanced Social Work Field I (6 credits)
TERM 3	
SOWK 7700:	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation
SOWK 75XX:	Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*
SOWK 7810:	Advanced Social Work Field II (6 credits)

*1-2 electives may be taken during Winter session which could reduce the number of courses taken during other terms. Discuss with your Academic Advisor if you are interested in pursuing this option.

Advanced Practice Electives:

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

Advanced Standing MSW Program: Part-Time Plan of Study

PART-TIME ADVANCED STANDING MSW PROGRAM	
TERM 1	
SOWK 6000: Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice	
SOWK 7600: Advanced Social Work Policy Practice	
TERM 2	
SOWK 7100: Differential Assessment & Psychopathology	
SOWK 75XX: Advanced Social Work Practice Elective	
TERM 3	
SOWK 7700: Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation	
SOWK 7800: Advanced Social Work Field I (6 credits)	
TERM 4	
SOWK 7810: Advanced Social Work Field II (6 credits)	
TERM 5	
SOWK 75XX: Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*	
SOWK 75XX: Advanced Social Work Practice Elective*	

*1-2 electives may be taken during Winter session which could affect the number of courses taken during other terms. Discuss with your Academic Advisor if you are interested in pursuing this option.

Advanced Practice Electives:

SOWK 7510	Social Work Administration
SOWK 7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
SOWK 7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health
SOWK 7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems
SOWK 7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth
SOWK 7599	Special Topics in Social Work

MSW Students Admitted Prior to Fall 2022

Students who were admitted prior to Fall 2022 should follow the Plan of Study that was in effect when they entered the program. Below are Crosswalks to help students identify equivalent courses to take in the new PennWest MSW curriculum to satisfy legacy MSW degree requirements.

PennWest Edinboro/Online Crosswalk

Edinboro Course Number & Title <i>If your plan of study says to take this course</i>	PennWest Course Number & Title <i>then register for this course</i>
SOWK 600: HBSE I	SOWK 6100: HBSE
SOWK 602: HBSE II	SOWK 7550, 7580, 7590, or 7599
SOWK 604: Social Policy & Social Policy Practice	SOWK 6600: Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 608: Social Work Research I	SOWK 6700: Social Work Research
SOWK 609: Social Work Research II	SOWK 7700: Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation
SOWK 612: Social Work Practice I	SOWK 6300: Social Work Practice with Individuals
SOWK 613: Social Work Practice II	SOWK 6400: Social Work Practice with Families and Groups
SOWK 622: Field Education Internship I	SOWK 6000: Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice
SOWK 623: Field Education Internship II	SOWK 6800: Foundation Social Work Field (register for 3 credits)
SOWK 640: Human Diversity	SOWK 6200: Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice
SOWK 706: Trauma-Informed Policy	SOWK 7600: Advanced Social Work Policy Practice
SOWK 717: Family Social Work Practice I	SOWK 6500: Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities
SOWK 719: Family Social Work Practice II	SOWK 7550, 7580, 7590, or 7599
SOWK 722: Field Internship III	SOWK 7800: Advanced Social Work Field I (register for 3 credits)
SOWK 723: Field Internship IV	SOWK 7810: Advanced Social Work Field II (register for 3 credits)
SOWK 742: Psychopathology	SOWK 7100: Differential Assessment & Psychopathology
SOWK 743: Addictions Assessment & Treatment for the Individual and Family	SOWK 7540: SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders
SOWK 744: Social Work Administration	SOWK 7510: Social Work Administration
SOWK 795: Trauma Theory & Treatment	SOWK 7520: Trauma Theory & Interventions
SOWK 796: Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment: Theory and Intervention	SOWK 7530: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

PennWest California/Hybrid Crosswalk

Core	SOWK	NEW COURSE TITLES	OLD COURSES
	6000	Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice	SWK 715
	6100	Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)	SWK 705
	6200	Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice	SWK 707
	6300	Social Work Practice with Individuals	SWK 701
	6400	Social Work Practice with Families and Groups	SWK 702
	6600	Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice	SWK 709
	6700	Social Work Research	SWK 716
	6800	Foundation Social Work Field	SWK 730
Required Advanced			
	7100	Differential Assessment & Psychopathology	SWK 803
	6500	Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities	SWK 801
	7600	Advanced Social Work Policy Practice	SWK 806
	7700	Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation	SWK 808
	7800	Advanced Social Work Field I	SWK 829
	7810	Advanced Social Work Field II	SWK 830
Electives			
	7510	Social Work Administration	SWK812
	7520	Trauma Theory & Interventions	
	7530	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	
	7540	SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders	SWK 821
	7550	Social Work Practice in Mental Health	SWK 814
	7580	Social Work Practice in Justice Systems	SWK 815
	7590	Social Work Practice with Children and Youth	SWK 816
	7599	Special Topics in Social Work	SWK 840

Academic Advisement

Academic Advisor Assignment

Students are assigned an advisor after admission to the MSW Program. Academic Advisors are full-time faculty members in the MSW Program. Academic advisors are listed on the student profile in the [myPennWest](#) portal. If you do not see your advisor listed in the portal, please contact the MSW Program Director.

Contacting Your Academic Advisor

Students should contact their Academic Advisor whenever necessary. Students are not required to contact Academic Advisors prior to registration for the first or any other term. Advising may occur via email, phone, Zoom, or Teams. Email is typically the most efficient way to contact an Academic Advisor and to set up a meeting. In the event that Academic Advisors do not reply in a timely manner, students should contact the MSW Program Director for assistance.

Academic Advisor Roles

Academic Advisors can assist with navigating registration, discussing Plans of Study, selecting courses, making referrals, and consulting around professional goals. Academic Advisors cannot transfer or waive course credits. Additionally, Academic Advisors cannot register or deregister students for courses; this is done by students only through the [myPennWest](#) portal.

Student Responsibilities

Students are solely responsible for ensuring completion of all degree requirements. Students are expected to regularly consult their Degree Works Audit through the [myPennWest](#) portal to track their progress. Students are also expected to keep copies of all course syllabi and field evaluations as they may need these for future reference.

Students are also solely responsible for awareness of their state/province requirements for curriculum and field requirements in regard to licensing. Please see the [Association of Social Work Board \(ASWB\) Licensing requirements by state or province web page](#). Another source is [CareerOneStop](#) which can direct students to correct information for each state by entering “Social Work” in the Keyword box and selecting the state of interest in the Location dropdown menu.

Academic Advisor/Faculty-Student Relationships

Faculty and students are expected to maintain appropriate professional conduct and boundaries as defined in the [NASW Code of Ethics](#) during the time students are enrolled in the MSW Program in both on and off-campus settings.

Advisement is provided solely with respect to academic and professional concerns. Academic Advisors may not engage in counseling or therapy related to the personal life of students as this creates the potential for violation of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) [Code of Ethics](#) with respect to dual relationships and maintenance of appropriate professional boundaries. Students who need counseling outside of academic or career advising may request or be offered a referral to campus or relevant community resources.

Registration and Enrollment

Course Registration

The MSW program is a year-round program with classes held in fall, spring, and summer terms. Term registration dates and deadlines are posted on the [Academic Calendar](#). Students will also get an email from the Registrar's office each term letting them know when they will be able to register for classes. **It is important to register for courses in a timely manner.** Timely registration helps administrators plan for an appropriate number of courses to make available and reduces the need for students to join a wait list.

Registration for all courses must be completed by the student through the [myPennWest](#) portal. Information about how to register can be found on the [Registration](#) page. Contact the Office of the Registrar if you have difficulty using the portal to register for courses. If the concern cannot be resolved by that office, contact your Academic Advisor or the MSW Program Director.

It is also important to pay attention to course start/end dates when registering, especially for Winter and Summer session courses which are condensed. Any student who fails to attend a class for which they are officially registered is expected to take the appropriate action to officially drop or withdraw from the course. If you fail to take the appropriate action by the published deadlines, you may lose refunds, lose financial aid including Stafford loans, receive failing grades, and be charged for the balance of your tuition and fees. **If you do not intend to remain in a course, it is your responsibility to be aware of the add/drop and withdrawal dates and to drop or withdraw from the course before the deadline.** See also [Add/Drop](#) and [Course Withdrawal](#) policies.

Waitlists

If one or more courses you need to follow your Plan of Study are full, put yourself on the course waitlist and contact your academic advisor. If you are on a waitlist, check your email daily and follow the directions to register by the deadline indicated if you are notified that a seat becomes available. If all waitlist seats are full, contact the MSW Program Director. Rest assured, Academic Advisors and the MSW Program Director will help you get enrolled in the courses you need to graduate on time. This may look like waiting for another section of a full course to be opened, adjusting your plan of study, or some other solution. More information about using waitlists can be found on the [Registration](#) page.

Minimum and Maximum Credit Loads

The minimum credit load for full-time students is 9 credits per term. Full-time students may register for no more than 15 credits in Fall and Spring terms and 12 credits in Summer terms without an academic override. Requests to override maximum credit hours must be justified and approved by both the faculty advisor and the program director. Part-time students using financial aid must take a minimum of 6 credits per term to remain aid eligible.

Time to Complete Degree Requirements

Students must complete MSW Program degree requirements within six years in accordance with policy on [Time Limitations to Meet Graduate Degree Requirements](#).

Leave of Absence

Students who are considering a Leave of Absence should consult with their Academic Advisor. If a student decides to pursue a Leave of Absence, they should inform their Academic Advisor and the MSW Program Director. It is also strongly encouraged that students seeking a Leave of Absence contact the [Financial Aid Office](#) and the [Office of the Registrar](#) to become aware of other considerations and consequences.

Also note the following:

- Students who are absent for four or more consecutive terms must apply for readmission.
- Students who take a Leave of Absence must still complete MSW Program degree requirements within six years.
- When planning to return from a Leave of Absence, students should inform their Academic Advisor and the MSW Program Director. At that time, the Academic Advisor can assist by creating an alternate Plan of Study for the student to follow for completion of the program.
- Please also see the University wide [Policy](#) on medical withdrawal.

Readmission

Students who are absent for four or more consecutive terms or who have been dismissed for unsatisfactory academic performance must apply for readmission. Consideration will be given to the length of absence and changes in the requirements for the degree. Decisions to readmit and which courses may count toward the degree requirements will be determined by the MSW Program Director and are subject to approval by the Dean. Also, note that students can get the re-application fee waived when re-applying by contacting grad admissions at gradadmissions@pennwest.edu. See the [Readmission Policy](#) for more details.

Academic Standing

Academic standing is verified by the [Office of the Registrar](#) and denoted on the official transcript which is updated at the end of each term or term, including winter intersession and at the end of each summer term. Students should remain aware of their academic standing as it may impact their financial aid eligibility.

Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 to remain in good standing in the MSW program. A maximum of two grades of “C” or lower are permitted while in the program. No F grades are permitted.

Academic Probation and Dismissal

A student whose GPA drops below 3.0 will be placed on Academic Probation. The student will remain on Academic Probation until they achieve Good Academic Standing, provided that the student earns a minimum of a 3.0 GPA in each term while on probation and does not earn their third grade of “C” or lower.

A student will be dismissed from their graduate program if they were on Academic Probation and failed to achieve a minimum 3.0 GPA in a given term, or earned their third grade of “C” or lower.

According to the [Academic Standing Policy](#), students who receive a grade of “F” in any graduate course will be dismissed from the program. Students may appeal their dismissal by following the process outlined in the [Grade and Other Appeals](#) section. If appeal is successful, the student will work with the academic dean and department chair, or designee, regarding requirements for continuation in the program.

Students may also be dismissed from their academic programs under other University or program policies, including but not limited to failing to meet expectations of program-specific dispositional policies or violating the Student Code of Conduct.

More details about academic standing can be found in the [Academic Standing—Graduate Students Policy](#). See also the [Professional Standards](#) section for more information about MSW Program dispositional policies.

Grading

The grading system for graduate students is summarized below. More details can be found in the [Grading Policy](#). Faculty members determine what level of performance constitutes what letter grade in the courses they teach. All MSW Program course syllabi contain information on course requirements, assignments, and how course grades are calculated.

Grade	Grade Points
4.00 A (Excellent)	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B (Good)	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C (Unsatisfactory)	2.00
C-	1.67
F (Failing)	0.00
M = Military Withdrawal	
I = Incomplete	
IP = In Progress	
W = Withdrawal	
AU = Audit	
S = Satisfactory	
U = Unsatisfactory	
CR = Credit	
NC = No Credit	
NR = Not Reported	

Grade and Other Appeals

University Policy provides for due process for appealing a final course grade. Students may appeal if there is clear evidence that the assignment of the grade was a result of a calculation error or unsubstantiated academic evaluation by the instructor. Complete information about this policy including detailed appeal procedures can be found in the [Grade Appeal Policy](#).

Students also have the right to appeal any decision made by the faculty or to file a grievance with reasonable cause. The MSW Program follows the same procedure as outlined in the [Grade Appeal Policy](#) for all appeals including appeals to Professional Standards Corrective Action Plans as well as Dismissal from the MSW Program.

All appeals begin with the faculty or staff member involved, then move to the Department Chair, to the Dean of the College, and then to the Vice President for Academic Affairs/Provost, where a hearing may be held.

MSW students who would like assistance navigating the appeal process are encouraged to contact their Academic Advisor, the MSW Program Director, or the Department Chair.

Incomplete Grades

A course grade of 'Incomplete' (I) may be issued at the discretion of the course instructor when student work is interrupted due to illness or other unforeseeable and compelling circumstances. An Incomplete grade will automatically be changed to an F grade if the work is not completed before the end of the next subsequent regular term. Individual Instructors may set their own conditions for removing an "Incomplete" as long as the time limit is not longer than the time limit specified in the Incomplete Grade policy and is done in writing with the agreement of the student.

Incomplete grades in courses that are pre-requisites for other courses must be removed before the student is permitted to enroll in the next course in the sequence of courses. Incomplete grades must be removed before their degree can be awarded. Detailed information can be found in the [Incomplete Grade Policy](#).

Course Repeats

Students may repeat a maximum of two courses during the MSW program and may repeat a single course for grade improvement only once unless the course itself is repeatable (e.g., SOWK 7599). The most recent grade, regardless of whether it is higher or lower, will be the grade used for calculation of the cumulative GPA. The original grade will remain on the transcript, which will reflect that the course was repeated. See the [Repeating Courses Policy](#) for more information.

Professional Standards

MSW students are expected to maintain a professional demeanor, as demonstrated by actions that are in keeping with the [NASW Code of Ethics Section 4.05](#) which states:

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

The MSW Program has adopted a Professional Standards Policy and Professional Standards Form (see [Appendix D](#)) to assist students in understanding and adhering to professional standards of conduct and to the values and ethics of the social work profession in both field and classroom settings. Students who are unable to maintain these standards may be dismissed from the program.

Professional Standards Policy

MSW students are expected to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics and to behave professionally. Failure to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics can lead to dismissal from the program. Specific types of behaviors that can lead to program dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal communication that is unconstructive and potentially damaging (e.g., disparaging, insulting, sexually suggestive, disrespectful, or offensive).
- Non-verbal communication that is disrespectful or aggressive (e.g., hitting, fighting, sexually suggestive gesturing, making faces when others are speaking, sleeping in class).
- Chronic absenteeism or a pattern of disrupting classes/field with late arrival for or early departure from classes/field.
- Disrupting classes/field through the use of technology that is not required for coursework (e.g., texting; emailing; use of cell phones; surfing the web during class; taking or posting pictures of classmates, colleagues, or faculty to social media).
- Inability to establish appropriate professional relationships.
- Lack of sensitivity and feeling for people.
- Preoccupation with or difficulty managing one's own needs and feelings.
- Limited ability to conceptualize and to apply theories and perspectives in practice.
- Inability to engage, assess, plan, implement, or evaluate interventions (including self-reflection under supervision).
- Persistent problems with recognizing and managing personal biases or with viewing clients and client systems with cultural humility.
- Behavior in supervisory relationships that indicates limited ability to self-reflect, a high degree of defensiveness, or frequent need for external cues and direction of learning.
- Evidence of a lack of personal or academic integrity (e.g., cheating, plagiarism, purchasing papers, unacknowledged or unethical use of AI, etc.).
- Substance use or impairment at the placement site that interferes with the ability to engage, assess, intervene in and/or evaluate client situations. Also includes use that interferes with the ability to interact appropriately with agency staff and/or the ability to seek, accept or adhere to guidance provided by field supervisors and field faculty.

Professional Standards Review Process

Social work faculty are charged with professional responsibility to help future social workers meet the comportment and demeanor requirements of the profession. Students are encouraged to review the Professional Standards Form throughout the program.

If a faculty member observes an academic concern or a concern related to professional behavior, the faculty member will complete a Professional Standards Form (see [Appendix D](#)). If a Field Instructor observes concern related to professional behavior that needs to be addressed, the Field Instructor will notify the Faculty Field Liaison who will complete the Professional Standards Form.

When a Professional Standards Form is initiated by either the faculty member or Faculty Field Liaison (on behalf of the Field Instructor), the following steps will be taken:

1. The Professional Standards Form will be completed by the faculty member(s) and the faculty member will contact the student to set up a meeting.
2. At the meeting, the Professional Standards Form will be reviewed.
3. The student will have an opportunity to respond to any concerns and will be given up 5 business days to respond in writing to the Professional Standards Form by completing the “Student response” on the final page of the Professional Standards Form and returning it to the faculty member who initiated the meeting.
4. The student and the faculty member(s) will work together to develop a Corrective Action Plan to address the concerns outlined in the Professional Standards Form. The Corrective Action Plan will be documented on the Professional Standards Form and a copy will be shared with the student and the student’s academic advisor. Additionally, a copy of the Corrective Action Plan will be placed in the student’s electronic record.
5. If the student does not agree with the recommendations for the Corrective Academic Plan, the student may appeal by following the process outlined in the [Grade and Other Appeals](#) section.
6. If the recommendation for the Corrective Action Plan is “Dismissal from the MSW Program,” the student may appeal by following the process outlined in the [Grade and Other Appeals](#) section.

Graduation and Commencement

Graduation

Graduation is the process of completing one’s degree requirements. Whether or not you plan to attend in person or online commencement, in order to graduate and receive your diploma, you must complete a multi-step process consisting of:

- Applying for graduation via the Graduation Application located in the [myPennWest](#) portal by the posted deadline.
- Completing all academic requirements for the degree.
- Fulfilling all financial obligations to the University.

More information can be found in the [Graduation Requirements](#) policy and on the [Graduation](#) website.

Commencement

Commencement is the ceremony at which degrees are conferred and where graduates have the opportunity to share the excitement and importance of their academic accomplishments with peers, family, and friends. Upon successful completion of the graduation steps outlined above, MSW students completing degree requirements are invited to attend an in-person commencement ceremony at one of the PennWest campus locations. More information can be found on the [Commencement](#) website.

Virtual BSW/MSW Commencement Ceremony: The department also hosts an virtual BSW/MSW commencement ceremony each May and December. Each graduating student's name is read aloud. Students are encouraged to invite family and friends to join. The virtual ceremony is recorded and a link to the recording is shared after the event.

Education Verification

Diplomas and Transcripts

Diplomas will be mailed to graduates after degrees are conferred, approximately four weeks after grades are posted. Please note that students must have all financial obligations to PennWest satisfied before their diploma will be released. More information can be found in the [Degree Conferral](#) policy.

Info about ordering transcripts can be found on the [Transcripts](#) page, and info about transcripts can be found in the [Transcript and Diploma](#) policy.

Education Verification

To take a state licensing exam, many states require that applicants submit education verification records completed by university officials. Please send requests for education verification to the Office of the Registrar at records@pennwest.edu or to the MSW Program Director for processing.

Licensure Questions

Students are solely responsible for awareness of their state/province requirements for curriculum and field requirements in regard to licensing. For questions about MSW licensing, check out the [ASWB Licensing requirements by state or province web page](#). Another source is [CareerOneStop](#) which can direct students to correct information for each state by entering 'Social Work' in the Keyword box and selecting the state of interest in the Location dropdown menu. Information about the oversight body responsible for licensing in the state you selected will be displayed. All questions regarding licensing should be directed to that oversight body.

MSW Program Policies and Expectations

Common MSW Course Policies

The following policies are consistent across MSW Program courses:

- The course instructor is considered the instructor of record and is therefore the only individual who can administer students' final course grades.
- By remaining in a course beyond the drop/add date, students agree that they have read and understood all requirements, policies, and expectations outlined in the syllabus.
- Since the PennWest MSW Program is accredited by the CSWE, students are required to complete program evaluations as instructed to comply with CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.
- In addition to university policies regarding student expectations, the MSW Program Student Professional Standards Policy (see [Appendix D](#)) outlines expectations of students specific to the profession of social work. Students are expected to be aware of, and abide by, these policies.

Variable MSW Course Policies

Some policies vary by course or instructor. Student should make themselves aware of policies and expectations that may differ among individual instructors which may include but are not limited to:

- Assignment format expectations (e.g., paper format, forum post format, file labeling)
- Policies on Late Work, Make-Up Work, and Extra Credit
- Policies regarding Changes to the Syllabus or Course Requirements
- Course technology requirements

Course Writing and APA Expectations

Writing is a major part of the social work profession. See the [MSW Student Resources](#) below to locate writing, research, and citation help. Unless otherwise specified, written assignments for coursework should aim to meet the following standards:

- **Structure:** Identifiable purpose or thesis statement, logical organization, and effective transitions within and between paragraphs including subheadings where appropriate.
- **Content:** Relevant, accurate, appropriate information, examples, and evidence to support claims and illustrate ideas.
- **Style:** Appropriate tone, tense, person, level of formality, and sentence structure for audience and purpose.
- **Mechanics:** Appropriate punctuation, grammar, spelling, and use of academic English.
- **Documentation:** When required, all source material should be cited using the most recent version of the American Psychological Association (APA) format.

- **Paper Format:** Formal academic papers are expected to follow APA paper format: double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font, title page, references page, header, and page numbers.
- **Source Material:** Students are expected to use timely, accurate, and credible sources. Unless otherwise specified, only academic references will be accepted. In general, encyclopedias (including Wikipedia) and unpublished student-written papers found online are unacceptable. For questions or concerns, please consult your instructor.

Avoiding Plagiarism

It is permissible to use the work, ideas, or writing of others, but it is necessary to indicate that you have done so and to give credit to the authors; otherwise, it may be considered plagiarism. Remember that direct quotes belong in quotation marks and require both in-text and reference page citations. Also remember that paraphrased information must be cited unless the information is common knowledge. For questions about citing sources and avoiding plagiarism, consult resources listed previously or your instructor. For additional information, see the Academic Integrity Policy on the [Academic Policies page](#).

CSWE Policies

CSWE uses the [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards](#) (EPAS) to accredit BSW and MSW programs. EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models and methods of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparable outcomes across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.

CSWE requires instructors to have an earned MSW and two years post-MSW practice experience as minimal qualifications to teach social work practice courses.

CSWE's EPAS requires that students engage in course content that covers a broad range of topics that incorporate student's personal and professional perceptions and self-awareness throughout. Therefore, content may expand or challenge students' worldviews. Since material of this nature is required by CSWE accredited MSW Programs, students cannot be exempt from these expectations.

Protection of Client Information

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) outlines regulations concerning protected health information. Any case information presented in class (verbal or written) that is taken from professional settings needs to be de-identified. De-identified means changing or removing any information that would allow someone to identify an individual, including obvious things like names and birth dates and also unique details (e.g., presenting problem, diagnosis, age, religion, family composition, race/ethnicity, or gender) that would allow for identification. Should one or more unique characteristics be directly related to the case presentation, they can be included if one is confident that this inclusion will not allow for identification. Confidentiality may be assured by changing other aspects or characteristics.

MSW Student Participation

Professional Development

MSW Students are encouraged to participate in professional development opportunities to advance their career goals, community engagement, and commitment to the profession. Professional development opportunities are afforded within the MSW Program and the university due to connections fostered by student affiliation with various agencies and groups.

Decision Making

Student input and involvement in decision-making is important. MSW Students are encouraged to participate formally and informally in the implicit and explicit curriculum and in the formation and modification of policies affecting academic and student affairs. Student input is invited regularly via course and program evaluations, surveys, and focus groups. There are also opportunities to participate in the university and MSW Program beyond the curriculum such as participation in virtual social events, continuing education events, and town hall meetings hosted by the MSW Program and the university.

SWAGS

The PennWest Social Work Association of Graduate Students (SWAGS) is a way for all current PennWest MSW students and alumni to stay connected and up to date. This organization is operated through the [SWAGS Facebook page](#). The goal of SWAGS is to connect campus students, online students, and alumni and increase awareness of

- professional opportunities
- field resources
- continuing education resources
- licensure information
- course offerings
- MSW curriculum
- department happenings
- and provide mutual aid and support for each other!

SWAGS is not an appropriate place to discuss course assignments, grades, or professors. Contact the MSW Program Director or the Social Work Department Chair if you need assistance with resolving course-related or other issues. Views and opinions expressed on SWAGS pages are strictly those of post and page authors. The contents of the site are not approved by PennWest University.

To join SWAGS: Click on the button to ask to join and answer the member question when prompted. An admin will verify student status prior to approval. Any questions about SWAGS can be directed to the group's Co-Faculty Advisors: [Dr. Christine Rine](#) or [Dr. Molly Wolf](#).

Phi Alpha Honor Society

The purpose of the Phi Alpha Honor Society is to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. Phi Alpha offers membership to social work students, faculty, and practitioners. The [Phi Alpha Honor Society](#) website provides more information and individual membership requirements. For more information contact your Academic Advisor.

MSW Student Resources

An important way that helping professionals model their professional values is by seeking help when needed. Students are expected to seek assistance in assuring their personal and professional wellbeing and academic success as they deem necessary. Below is a list of resources that may be useful.

Academic Support

- **Library Help:** MSW students can access library services and resources via the [PennWest University Libraries](#).
- **APA Help:** Visit the [Social Work Resources page](#) for APA, citation information, and more. The [Purdue Online Writing Lab \(OWL\) APA Introduction](#) is also a helpful resource.
- **Tutoring:** To access PennWest peer tutoring and writing support services, please log into Starfish via the [myPennWest](#) portal. Full instructions can be found in Starfish at the top of your screen ("TUTORING INSTRUCTIONS"). To access Tutor.com tutoring services, please use the link located in the "University Resources" drop-down menu in D2L Brightspace. This will take you directly into Tutor.com -- you must always use the link inside D2L to access.

Technology Help

[Information Technology Services](#) provides assistance to students in meeting their technology needs.

Student Support Services

Links to additional resources on each campus are available through the [Student Support and Services page](#).

Trauma Exposure, Self-Care, and Trauma-Informed Teaching

Some of the material presented in MSW courses—and some of the ways in which it is presented—may be upsetting or temporarily overwhelming at times. It is well-documented that indirect exposure to trauma narratives may put helping professionals and trainees at risk for developing trauma reactions, particularly those who have a personal trauma history or limited clinical experience. Self-awareness and good self-care go a long way in recognizing and minimizing distress and bouncing back from it. Be sure to do periodic self-checks on how course materials—and the ways in which material is delivered and discussed—are affecting you.

Titration exposure, limiting exposure before bedtime, and practicing [grounding techniques](#) if you start feeling overwhelmed can be helpful strategies for minimizing and managing distress. Getting support from campus and community resources, friends, colleagues, family, and mental health professionals is also important, especially if you have risk factors that might make you more likely to be triggered by some material or you find yourself becoming distressed. And, of course, please speak with your instructor, Academic Advisor, or the MSW Program Director if you find you are having difficulties with any aspect of your courses.

Counseling and Crisis Services

- **Counseling:** MSW students can consult the [Health and Wellness website](#) for information on wellness assistance and mental health emergencies.
- **Community Services:** Call 211 to get referrals for local community services or visit the [211 website](#) for more info.
- **Crisis:** The [National Hope Line](#) provides free 24/7 confidential crisis support in the US: call or text 1-877-235-4525. The [Crisis Text Line](#) provides free 24/7 crisis support in the US: text HOME to 741741. The [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#) provides 24/7 crisis support: call 988.

Students with Disabilities

Pennsylvania Western University of Pennsylvania offers services to meet the accommodation needs of students with many types of disabilities. The Office for Students with Disabilities provides services to students based upon documentation of a disability and a request for accommodations based on this disability. Please refer to PennWest's Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities Policy for additional information. This policy is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Students reserve the right to decide when to self-identify and when to request accommodations. Students requesting approval for reasonable accommodations should contact the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students are expected to adhere to OSD procedures for self-identifying, providing documentation and requesting accommodations in a timely manner.

For questions about accommodations please contact:

- PennWest California: John Massella at Osd-cal@pennwest.edu
- PennWest Clarion: Ron Radaker at Osd-clr@pennwest.edu
- PennWest Edinboro: Sharon Conklin at Osd-edn@pennwest.edu

Financial Aid

For questions and concerns about finances, tuition, and fees, use the campus links on the [Tuition & Aid page](#). Students may also want to contact the Financial Aid Office to get information about how Winter and Summer courses are managed in relation to financial aid/loan options. Below is some information from the Financial Aid Office:

- For Financial Aid considerations, an academic year consists of fall, spring, summer, and winter terms. Please be aware that taking courses in a manner different from what is outlined in the [MSW Program Plans of Study](#) may present difficulties qualifying for student loans. Please contact the Financial Aid Office for assistance with determining this possibility.
- Graduate students taking graduate level courses may receive up to \$20,282 annually in the Direct Unsubsidized Stafford Loan Program. Additionally, students may need to apply for Grad Plus loans to cover annual tuition costs.
- Most students will use their Stafford loans during the 9-month period (Fall and Spring). However, students will want to be mindful of their financial aid to allow for funding for 12 months if planning on enrolling during the Summer or Winter terms. Students who receive student loans should consider their need to budget 'refunds' to cover payment for courses in Winter and Summer terms; there are no separate loan disbursements for these terms.
- Most graduate students qualify for loans with refunds over \$5,000 for both Fall and Spring terms; this refund money can be saved to pay for Winter and Summer terms. Fall refunds can be applied to Winter tuition payments and Spring refunds can be applied to Summer tuition payments. Please budget accordingly to ensure your ability to complete this program.
- Students will have an option to apply for Graduate Plus loan or private loans if other funding has been exhausted.

Scholarships

PennWest offers its students a wide variety of permanently endowed scholarships. Through the General Scholarship Application, students can apply to be considered for these awards. Each scholarship has its own selection criteria and award amounts, and availability can vary from year to year. Application/nomination requirements may also vary. While there are numerous scholarships available, students are also encouraged to apply for federal aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

To begin applying through the General Scholarship Application log-in to your [myPennWest](#) account and then follow the [how-to instructions](#).

Graduate Assistantships

A limited number of MSW Graduate Assistant (GA) positions are available each year. Available MSW GA positions as well as GA positions in other programs and departments are posted on Handshake. Please reach out to the MSW Program Director or Department Chair for more information about MSW GA positions and reach out to the [Career Center](#) for more information about GA positions in other programs or departments.

Career Center

The PennWest [Career Center](#) is available to assist MSW students and alumni with exploring and applying for jobs and with developing career readiness skills such creating a resume and cover letter and honing interview skills.

PennWest Policies and Procedures

Pennsylvania Western University has multiple course-related policies addressing issues such as accommodations for students with disabilities, class attendance, and grade appeal, among others. The Student Code of Conduct also addresses issues of cheating and plagiarism, and the consequences of such behaviors. Some commonly referenced University policies are noted below. These and additional PennWest policies can be found on the [Academic Policies page](#).

Preferred First Name

Upon first contact with the University, information submitted online will provide the option of a preferred first name. After matriculation, students requesting a preferred first name can submit the request online through their self-service portal. Requests will be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Registrar. Students may change a preferred first name once per term. See the [Preferred First Name](#) and [Name Change](#) policies for more information.

Attendance

As adult learners and members of the professional social work community, we learn from engaging interactively with our colleagues around issues of mutual concern and interest. Therefore, active and timely participation is expected in all courses. In online courses, attendance refers to observable course participation on the course website. See [Class Attendance Policy](#) for more information.

Final Exams

For online classes, the instructor will determine the final examination date at the beginning of the term, which must be listed on the syllabus. Faculty in online classes may assign a window of time for the final exam to be completed. For instance, the exam may be available to students on the Wednesday of Finals Week from 8:00 am until midnight; the student must complete the exam at some point during this timeframe.

Where a final examination is not appropriate in the discipline, a culminating academic exercise must be held during the scheduled time.

Students with disabilities with accommodations approved through the Office for Students with Disabilities will also receive applicable approved accommodations for final examinations.

See [Finals Week Policy](#) for more details.

Academic Integrity

It is expected that all work submitted is the student's original work, generated for the express purpose of completing course requirements. All papers submitted may be screened for originality using plagiarism detection software. Violations of academic integrity may be found in PennWest's Academic Integrity policy on the [Academic Policies page](#) which also includes potential sanctions faced by the student for violations of the policy.

Title IX Information

Pennsylvania Western University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the University's commitment to offering supportive measures in accordance with guidance from the Office of Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator; Amy E. Salsgiver asalsgiver@pennwest.edu. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project.

Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University Protection of Minors Policy.

Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is available on the Office of Compliance and Title IX website at [TITLE IX \(pennwest.edu\)](#). On the Edinboro campus, reports can also be sent to Andrew Matt, Associate Director of Compliance and Title IX amatt@pennwest.edu. On the Clarion campus, reports can also be sent to Amy Salsgiver, Executive Director of Compliance and Title IX asalsgiver@pennwest.edu. On the California campus, reports can also be sent to Marissa Fouser, Employment Services and Contract Manager, fouser@pennwest.edu. For Global Online, reports can also be sent to Andrew Matt, Associate Director of Compliance and Title IX amatt@pennwest.edu.

Reporting DEI Incidents

The Inclusive Community Assessment Team (ICAT) serves the university community and works to provide effective, educational responses to conduct that disrupts the University community, including incidents involving hate speech. Students, faculty and staff can report conduct or an expression that is motivated by hostility against another individual (or group) because of the other person's (or group's) race, color, age, religion, ancestry, national origin, disability, gender identity or expression and sexual orientation using this [online form](#).

It is not ICAT's purpose to investigate, arbitrate or take the place of other University processes or services. Rather, ICAT will complement and work with campus departments to identify and connect affected individuals with appropriate support and resources. Where ICAT believes there may be criminal activity, the team will forward the report to the University Police Department. If the nature of the incident rises to the level of a hate crime, it will be referred to the University Police Department and the Behavior Intervention Team (BIT). Instances of conduct that may violate the Student Code of Conduct will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for review and consideration for appropriate action.

SECTION TWO

PennWest MSW Field Education Manual

Part 1: The MSW Field Education Office

The PennWest MSW Field Education experience is your bridge between coursework and practice and an opportunity to develop your own professional identity as a Social Worker.

Every student's field experience is unique, and it is our goal to assist you in attaining and succeeding in a growth-focused field placement that meets your own practice interests, while providing you with a supportive, challenging, and competency-based learning experience.

To successfully complete your field experience, it is essential to familiarize yourself with this manual and to consult it regularly throughout your field experience. We also encourage you to share this manual with potential field agencies and instructors when you are interviewing or working to secure a field placement.

Who to Contact about MSW Field Questions

To ensure a smooth and productive learning experience, students are expected to promptly address any concerns that arise during their field placements, or plans for future site placements. Common concerns may include issues related to supervision, safety, workload, ethical dilemmas, or conflicts at the field site.

The table below provides contact information for common field-related MSW student questions and concerns.

All general questions about MSW field should be directed to: mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu

Who To Contact

For/About	Contact	Email or Link
General questions about field policies & process	MSW Field Office	mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu
Experiential Learning Cloud	MSW Field Office	mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu
Field course registration	MSW Field Office	mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu
Deferring field	Field Office and Academic Advisor	mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu Your Academic Advisor is listed in your My.PennWest.edu portal

For/About	Contact	Email or Link
Questions about course syllabus, assignments, discussion boards	Faculty Liaison	Use the faculty email in your SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810 course syllabus
Signing off on hours, supervision, learning plans, daily tasks, etc.	Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor	Use the email for your agency Field Instructor and/or Task Supervisor
Internship grade concerns	Contact your course instructor first and the MSW Program Director or Department Chair also if needed	Use the faculty email in your SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810 course syllabus
Problems at your field placement	Contact your Faculty Liaison first and the MSW Field Office also if needed	Use the faculty email in your SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810 course syllabus
Field site or supervision disruptions	Contact your Faculty Liaison first and the MSW Field Office also	Use the faculty email in your SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810 course syllabus mswfieldoffice@pennwest.edu
Appeals or other concerns that you are unable to resolve with the Field Office	Department Chair See also Grade and Other Appeals section of this document	Dr. Kim Hardner khardner@pennwest.edu
Non-field related MSW questions or concerns	Academic Advisor, MSW Program Director	mswprogram@pennwest.edu
Your Plan of Study, holds on your account, general registration questions	Academic Advisor	Listed in your My.PennWest.edu portal
Peer Support	SWAGS Facebook Group, social forums in your classes, online social events	SWAGS Facebook Group
PennWest email & password, D2L, and other tech problems not related to Experiential Learning Cloud	IT Services Help Desk	ITS Website 814-732-2111 or use link in the My.PennWest.edu portal

Part 2: Field Education Structure

This section introduces information about the purpose and structure of competency-based field education in general and the structure of competency-based field education in the PennWest MSW Program in particular.

Field Education: The Signature Pedagogy of Social Work

The Council on Social Work Education has identified field education as the signature pedagogy of social work. As described in Educational Policy 3.3, of the [2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards \(EPAS\)](#) by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):

The field setting is where students apply human rights principles from global and national social work ethical codes to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. It fosters a learning environment where anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued. Field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria and measures of student acquisition and demonstration of the nine social work competencies.

Competency-Based Education in the Field

CSWE has identified nine social work competencies that are essential to generalist social work practice. CSWE also requires MSW Programs to develop specialized competencies that build upon the nine generalist competencies.

Social Work Competencies

Full descriptions of the CSWE Generalist Competencies and the PennWest Trauma-Informed Specialized MSW Competencies can be found in [Appendix C](#).

- 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
- 2 Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
- 3 Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
- 4 Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
- 5 Engage in Policy Practice
- 6 Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 7 Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 8 Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
- 9 Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

System Levels and Areas of Practice

Students are expected to demonstrate learning and application of generalist and specialized competencies in all the following system levels, even if not directly engaging with each:

- **Individuals:** Engage in or learn about and apply direct practice with individual clients, focusing on assessment, intervention, and evaluation tailored to the unique needs of each person.
- **Families:** Work with or learn about and apply family systems approaches to address dynamics, improve relationships, and provide support that considers the family's collective needs and strengths.
- **Groups:** Facilitate, participate in, or study and apply group interventions, including support groups, therapy groups, and community-based group activities aimed at collective empowerment and problem-solving.
- **Organizations:** Engage with or study and apply knowledge about organizations to understand their structure, culture, and impact on service delivery.
- **Communities:** Work within or learn about and apply community settings to promote social justice, community well-being, and systemic change.

Part 3: Field Placement Prerequisites

This section describes requirements MSW students must meet prior to applying for a field placement.

SOWK 6000

All students are required to complete SOWK 6000: Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice, a didactic pre-field course which provides a semester long orientation to MSW field policies, process, and practices. The course introduces trauma-informed social work practice fundamentals and prepares students for finding, applying for, and completing their field experience. Students must successfully complete SOWK 6000 prior to starting their first field placement; therefore, all students should take SOWK 6000 during their first semester of the program. Delaying SOWK 6000 will delay the start of your field placement.

Experiential Learning Cloud

The MSW Field Education Program uses a comprehensive web-based field placement tracking system called "**Experiential Learning Cloud**" (formerly Tevera). This system allows MSW Students, Field Instructors, Faculty Liaisons, Task Supervisors, Affiliated Organizations, the MSW Field Office, and related personnel to access shared information electronically.

All MSW Students are required to have an Experiential Learning Cloud Account. You cannot submit a Site Placement application or complete field education requirements without an active Experiential Learning Cloud account.

Purchasing Experiential Learning Cloud

Unless you already have an Experiential Learning Cloud or Tevera account (see below), you must purchase Experiential Learning Cloud to successfully complete your SOWK 6000 course and to complete your field placements. You will receive an invitation via your school email to register for Experiential Learning Cloud while enrolled in SOWK 6000.

You will **choose one** of the two options for registering for Experiential Learning Cloud:

1. Option 1: Purchase directly from Experiential Learning Cloud

- a. The current cost for purchasing directly from Experiential Learning Cloud is \$223 (\$215 + \$8 credit card processing fee).
- b. You must use your personal debit or credit card to purchase directly from the registration link that was sent to you.

2. Option 2: Entering a code purchased from the PennWest Bookstore

- a. Students who are eligible to purchase textbooks using financial aid may use aid to purchase an Experiential Learning Cloud registration code. This option will include an additional fee and may take longer to receive. Also dates to use financial aid at the bookstore are limited, so plan accordingly.
- b. The current cost through the bookstore is \$286.75.
- c. To purchase the code from the bookstore, visit [this link](#). Be sure to choose the pick up at store option so you get a digital code and don't pay a shipping fee.
- d. **The bookstore does not keep a record of this code, so do not lose it.**
- e. Once you have the registration code from the bookstore, enter it on the Experiential Learning Cloud registration page.
- f. **Please address any questions about purchasing Experiential Learning Cloud from the bookstore directly to the bookstore.**

Students who already purchased Experiential Learning Cloud

At another institution: If you already purchased an Experiential Learning Cloud or Tevera account from another institution, you do not need to repurchase Experiential Learning Cloud. Please contact the Field Office with the following information, and we will have your account transferred to our program for free:

- The name of your former institution
- Your former email address associated with Experiential Learning Cloud

At PennWest: If you purchased Experiential Learning Cloud or Tevera as a PennWest BSW student or for another graduate program, you do not need to repurchase Experiential Learning Cloud. You can transition your existing Experiential Learning Cloud account directly from our BSW program to the MSW program. Please contact the MSW Field Office right away so we can update your account.

After Registering Your Experiential Learning Cloud Account

Be sure to access Experiential Learning Cloud on a computer, not a phone or tablet, to use it correctly. Experiential Learning Cloud also works best on browsers like Chrome or Edge.

Once you register your Experiential Learning Cloud account and log in, you will see several tiles on your home page. Please click on the Learning Space and complete the Experiential Learning Cloud tutorials to understand how Experiential Learning Cloud works. You will also see “MSW Program” tab at the top of the Learning Space. Here you will find detailed information about the PennWest MSW field program.

There is also a Help button on the top right corner of the home screen. Students are encouraged to use this to help problem solve. Other questions about Experiential Learning Cloud should be directed to the MSW Field Office.

Field Information Sessions

At the beginning of each semester (Fall, Spring, and Summer), the MSW Field Office conducts virtual field information sessions covering expectations, ethical practice, professional conduct, and the integration of classroom knowledge with practical experience. Virtual sessions also provide opportunity for students to ask questions and socialize with their peers. Attendance is voluntary but strongly encouraged. Pre-recorded information is also available in Experiential Learning Cloud.

Part 4: Field Courses & Hour Requirements

This section outlines the sequence of field courses, application due dates, field deferral information, field hour requirements, and internship start/end dates.

Field Course Sequence

There are two field placement types: Foundation and Advanced. The Foundation placement focuses on development of the nine generalist social work competencies and is completed concurrently with SOWK 6800. The Advanced placement focuses on development of the nine specialized competencies and is completed concurrently with SOWK 7800 and 7810. See Appendix C for foundation and advanced competency descriptions.

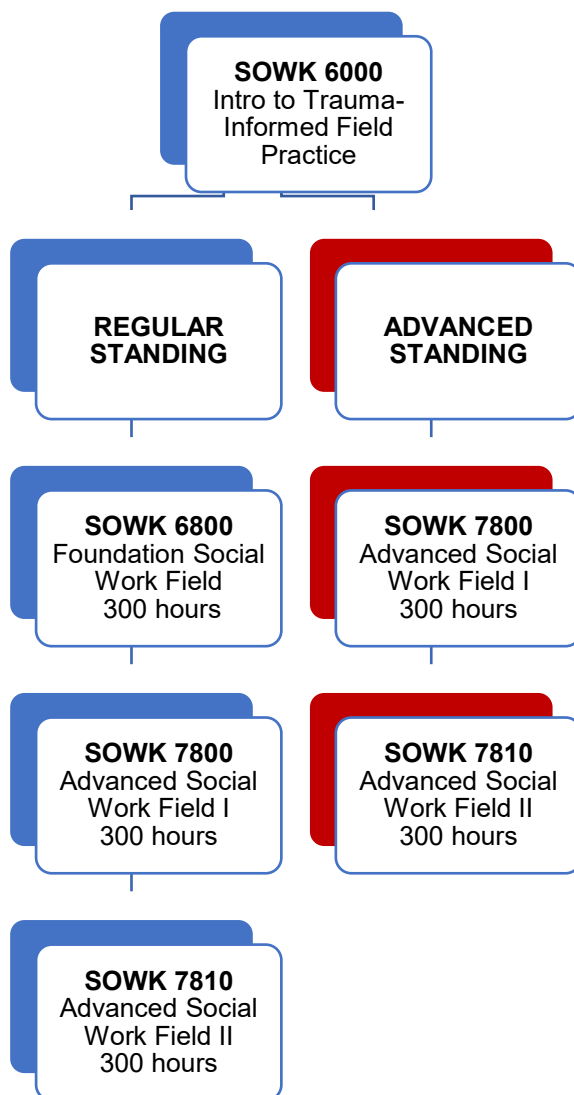
All MSW students must complete SOWK 6000: Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice prior to enrolling in other Social Work field courses and prior to beginning a field placement.

After SOWK 6000, Regular Standing MSW students complete SOWK 6800, 7800, and 7810 consecutively.

After SOWK 6000, Advanced Standing MSW students complete SOWK 7800 and 7810 consecutively.

Students *cannot* enroll in two field courses at the same time.

Field Course Sequence by MSW Program Standing



Students can adjust the Plan of Study to accommodate their individual field needs. Contact your Academic Advisor with questions about adjusting your Plan of Study.

Field Hour Requirements

CSWE requires a total of 900 hours of supervised practice to earn the MSW degree. How many hours you complete in the MSW Program depends on your program standing.

Regular Standing (60-credit) MSW Program students complete 900 hours minimum of supervised practice during two field placements. The Foundation placement (300 hours) is completed during one semester, followed by the Advanced placement (600 hours) which is completed during two consecutive semesters.

Advanced Standing (33-credit) MSW Program students are credited for 300 hours of supervised practice completed for their BSW degree and therefore complete only the Advanced placement which is 600 hours minimum. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, all students are expected to complete SOWK 7800 and 7810 at the same agency over two consecutive semesters (e.g., Summer/Fall, Fall/Spring, or Spring/Summer). 300 hours minimum are required each semester.

Internship Start and End Dates & Hours Accrual

You may begin your internship during the first week of the semester you are enrolled in the associated field course. The days and times you are at your placement will be determined in agreement by you, your Field Site, and your MSW Field Instructor.

All hours must be completed during the semester dates. You are expected to complete a minimum of 16 hours per week during each week of the semester including at least one hour per week of MSW supervision. It is recommended you complete at least 20-22 hours each week to stay on track to complete the 300 minimum required hours each semester you are in field.

Weekly MSW supervision is mandatory. Contact your Faculty Liaison immediately if you are encountering any difficulties with meeting your supervision requirements.

You *cannot* complete any portion of your field hours before the semester starts or after the semester ends without formal approval by the MSW Field Office and your Faculty Liaison and only under exceptional circumstances.

Likewise, you *cannot* end your internship early just because you have reached your minimum hour requirement, nor can you apply hours earned from one semester to finish the subsequent semester's internship early.

Students are *not* expected to complete field hours or meet for supervision on holidays or during school breaks but may do for continuity of care or to make up hours missed due to illness or other circumstances.

There is no prescribed mix of hours by category of task or competency, and there is no required number of "clinical" hours.

In work-based field placements, student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward field hours if the tasks have clear connections to the nine social work competencies and their related behaviors. Students at work-based placements cannot record a blanket 40 hours per week on their time reports. Students must document hours that reflect tasks outlined in the learning plan.

Starting Fall 2025, students are no longer permitted to count class hours toward their required field hours. Please consult with your Faculty Liaison if you have questions or if you anticipate any difficulty meeting your minimum field hour requirement.

Part 5: Field Placement Policies & Processes

This section details the process for securing and submitting field placements. Additional information and resources for finding a field placement can be found in the MSW tab of the Experiential Learning Cloud Learning Space.

Field Form Deadlines

As an MSW Student, you will take a leadership role in finding, securing, and submitting field placement forms in Experiential Learning Cloud by the deadlines listed below.

October 1	for the following Spring
March 1	for the following Summer
June 1	for the following Fall*

**Note: Advanced Standing students admitted to the program in the Summer will be supported with an extended deadline but should contact the MSW Field Office as soon as possible.*

Securing a Field Site & Supervision

Field placements occur in a variety of settings, such as organizations that provide social work services to, or on behalf of, clients. CSWE defines clients as individuals, families, groups, organizations, or communities. Students are responsible for locating their own field placement site and can select from a variety of public and private practice settings, including:

- Family Based Agencies
- Substance Use Treatment Centers
- Schools
- Mental Health Care Agencies
- Medical Care and Rehabilitation Facilities
- Community Mental Health Centers
- Psychiatric Treatment Facilities
- Immigrant and Refugee Services
- Private Practice
- Neighborhood Organizations
- Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Facilities
- Child Welfare Agencies
- Hospitals
- Prisons
- Veteran Agencies
- Forensic Agencies
- Child Guidance Clinics
- Foster Care and Adoption Agencies
- Skilled Nursing Facilities
- Hospices
- Senior Centers
- Inpatient and Outpatient Services
- Advocacy Organizations
- The Office of an Elected Official
- Various Other Community Practice and Policy Settings

In addition to securing a field site, students must also secure a qualified MSW to serve as their Field Instructor. A qualified MSW is someone who has a MSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program and a minimum of two years post-MSW experience. Supervision may be conducted in person, via video conferencing, or a combination of both.

In many cases, your agency will be able to provide a qualified MSW to supervise you. If your agency is unable to provide a qualified MSW, you will need to secure offsite supervision from a qualified MSW. In such cases, you will also need to identify someone at the agency who oversees your day-to-day activities to serve as a Task Supervisor. Students are not permitted to pay for third party internship supervision. Tips for finding an offsite MSW can be found in the Experiential Learning Cloud Learning Space.

See [Part 6](#) of this manual for detailed information about Field Roles and Responsibilities.

Employment-Based Placements & Paid Internships

The PennWest MSW Field Education Program permits work-based placements and paid internships. All field placements follow the same criteria for approval, including field placements in an organization in which the student is employed. In employment-based internship settings, student field assignments and employment tasks may be the same and counted toward field hours if the tasks have clear linkages to the nine social work competencies and their related behaviors. The MSW Field Director is responsible for reviewing and approving field placement applications, which are submitted and managed in Experiential Learning Cloud. Supervision with a qualified Field Instructor must be focused on the student learning plan and educational goals and kept separate from their employment supervision or performance review. All field placements likewise follow the same process for addressing disruptions as described in the [Disruptions to Site Placements or Supervision policy](#) below.

Remote Placement Activities

Remote or virtual field activities are permitted if the work you do directly benefits the clients or client systems served by your field site and if you are able to successfully demonstrate all required practice behaviors.

Clearances

Students are responsible for obtaining any clearances and for completing any testing or other requirements such as child abuse clearance, criminal background check, fingerprints, drug tests, physicals, TB tests, vaccinations, CPR certification, etc. Some procedures and processes can take several weeks to complete. If you have a criminal record, be aware of how it might affect securing a placement. Also be aware that if you are required to pass a drug test you will still need to pass the test even if you have a medical marijuana card (see also the [Drug Use Policy](#) in Appendix E). If you cannot meet the requirements of the background check or the testing requirements, you will not be able to intern at the agency. Additional information on obtaining clearances can be found in the Experiential Learning Cloud Learning Space.

Liability Insurance

Students are required to submit a Liability Insurance Acknowledgement form during their SOWK 6000 and prior to submitting any field placement approval forms. Students are responsible for purchasing liability insurance if required to do so by the agency. Students whose agencies do not require purchase of liability insurance are not required to purchase coverage but are encouraged to do so prior to beginning their field placement. More information about purchasing liability insurance can be found in the Liability Insurance Acknowledgement form and in the Experiential Learning Cloud Learning Space.

Disruptions to Site Placements or Supervision

The MSW Field Education Program recognizes that disruptions to site placements and supervision can occur due to various reasons. Students are responsible for notifying the Faculty Liaison and Field Office immediately if there is a disruption in their field education. Disruptions include termination and leaving by choice. The student will collaborate with Faculty Liaison and the Field Office to address the disruption. This is often done through the Professional Standards Review process outlined in the MSW Handbook. At the time of the review, students will be provided with options on how to proceed. Students are not permitted to continue with their field placement until the disruption is addressed. Students whose placement has been terminated should not initiate any further contact with the agency.

If there is an unexpected change in agency staff that leaves a student without MSW supervision during the semester, the student is required to contact the Field Office immediately. The MSW Field Office will assist the student in locating an interim field instructor. This may be in the form of faculty, alumni, or group supervision.

Deferring Field to a Different Semester

You may defer field courses to a different semester than the semester listed in your original [Plan of Study](#); however, this may affect your anticipated graduation date, particularly if you are Advanced Standing. You should contact your Academic Advisor and the Field Office about your options.

Steps in the Field Placement Approval Process

Reach out to the Field Office with questions or issues completing any of the steps below.

- 1. Contact agencies directly to apply for a field placement**
 - a. Do NOT contact agencies via Experiential Learning Cloud to apply for an internship. Forms are submitted to agencies via Experiential Learning Cloud only after you have accepted an internship offer.
 - b. Tips for Finding a Field Placement can be found in the MSW tab in the Experiential Learning Cloud Learning Space.
 - c. You can reach out to your academic advisor, your SOWK 6000 instructor, or the Field Office for support as you search for a site in your community that meets your needs.

- 2. Contact potential Field Instructors directly about MSW supervision**
 - a. In most cases, your agency will be able to provide a qualified a MSW to supervise you and serve as your Field Instructor.
 - b. Contact the agency MSW to confirm the MSW's availability prior to submitting a Field Instructor form for them in Experiential Learning Cloud.
 - c. If your agency is not able to provide a qualified MSW, you will need to secure offsite supervision from a qualified MSW. In such cases, you will also need to identify someone at the agency who oversees your day-to-day activities to serve as a Task Supervisor.

- 3. Email the Field Office about your placement offer**
 - a. Let us know which agency has offered you an internship.
 - b. Provide site representative contact information if an affiliation agreement is needed.
 - c. Disclose any dual relationships (e.g., family members or other close relationships) with agency members to determine suitability of the placement and to ensure safeguards are in place to engage in ethical practice.

- 4. Submit appropriate field placement forms by the deadline**
 - a. Deadlines: Forms do not have to be finalized by the following deadlines but must be started in Experiential Learning Cloud by the following deadlines:
 - i. October 1st for the following Spring semester
 - ii. March 1st for the following Summer semester
 - iii. June 1st for the following Fall semester
 - b. Forms:
 - i. All students must sign the Liability Insurance Acknowledgement form prior to submitting field forms.
 - ii. For 6800, all students must complete a Site Confirmation Form and a Field Instructor Confirmation Form (and a Task Supervisor Form if needed).
 - iii. For 7800, form completion depends on your program standing:
 - All Advanced Standing students must complete a Site Confirmation Form and Field Instructor Confirmation Form (and a Task Supervisor Form if needed).
 - Regular Standing students who intern at a different agency for 7800 must complete another Site Confirmation Form and Field Instructor Confirmation Form (and another Task Supervisor Form if needed).
 - Regular Standing students who are currently in 6800 and who plan to intern next semester at the same agency for 7800 submit a Site Extension Request Form.
 - Regular Standing students who are currently in 6800 and who plan to intern at the same agency for 7800 after a break of one or more

semesters must complete another Site Confirmation Form and Field Instructor Confirmation Form (and Task Supervisor Form if needed).

- iv. For 7810, you do not need to submit any additional forms unless you are changing your Field Site, Field Instructor, or Task Supervisor. Contact the Field Office if you need to make any changes.

5. Confirm the onboarding process with the agency

- a. Inquire with the agency about what clearances or pre-screening they require, if any, and in what time frame. (See Clearances section above for more information on clearances.)
- b. Contact the Field Office for prior approval if the agency requires you to complete orientation or training prior to the start of the semester.

6. Track the status of your submitted forms

- a. Check the status of each form. They may all have a different status at any given time.
- b. Follow up with agency staff as needed to ensure forms are completed in a timely manner. Remind agency staff to use a computer to complete forms in Experiential Learning Cloud.
- c. Remember that finalizing an Affiliation Agreement may be a lengthy process. Keep this in mind if you are interested in a site that does not already have an Affiliation Agreement with the university since there is no guarantee the agreement will be finalized in time for you to begin your field placement during the semester for which you initially applied.

7. Enroll in your associated field course (6800, 7800, 7810)

- a. When registration begins, use the student self-service portal to register for the appropriate field course (6800, 7800, or 7810). Only one section of the course will be visible. This section is a “holding section.” Register for this section. Students whose field applications are finalized will be moved from the holding section to a smaller section with an assigned instructor about a week prior to the start of classes.
- b. If your paperwork is not completed in time, you will be dropped from the holding section and will need to defer field to another semester. Be sure to submit all outstanding forms and to follow up with agency staff for any outstanding signatures needed to ensure your placement is approved in a timely manner.

8. Communicate with the Field Office throughout the placement approval process

- a. Respond promptly to communications from the Field Office.
- b. Notify the Field Office immediately of any changes in your field placement plans.

Part 6: Field Roles & Responsibilities

This section outlines roles and responsibilities of all participants in the field education process, including MSW Students, Field Sites, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, Faculty Liaisons, and the MSW Field Education Office.

Student Criteria & Responsibilities

The student has the major responsibility for their own learning and is expected to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of the field education experience. While in the field internship, the student is expected to maintain the same ethical standards and practices as the professional staff.

MSW Student Criteria

- Has successfully completed SOWK 6000.
- Is in good standing in the MSW Program.
- Has received approval from the MSW Field Office.
- Has enrolled in the associated field course (SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810).

MSW Student Responsibilities

- ✚ Reads, understands, and regularly consults the MSW Field Education Manual.
- ✚ Shares the MSW Student Handbook, the course syllabus, and required Experiential Learning Cloud assignment due dates and procedures with their MSW Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if applicable).
- ✚ Completes and accurately documents all required field hours (see Part 4 of this manual for more information on field hour requirements).
- ✚ Meets weekly with their MSW Field Instructor for a minimum of 1-hour, uninterrupted field supervision in person or via video conferencing. Students are encouraged to bring an agenda to their field supervision meetings.
- ✚ Coordinates a virtual site visit with their Faculty Liaison and MSW Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor if applicable). This is normally conducted at least once a semester.
- ✚ Advocates for themselves in pursuit of their learning and make their Field Instructor aware of any pertinent information that may affect their ability to learn.
- ✚ Completes tasks and assignments in a manner consistent with Field Site policies and procedures and seek appropriate direction or clarification when needed.
- ✚ Completes all assignments required for field and for the associated field education course.
- ✚ Take responsibility for a clear understanding about the student's use of agency material in the classroom.
- ✚ Respects client/agency confidentiality and abide by the [NASW Code of Ethics](#).
- ✚ Develops an identity as a professional social worker through learning and applying social work values and ethics.
- ✚ Engages in appropriate termination activities with clients and agency at the end of the internship.
- ✚ Reaches out to their Field Instructor, Faculty Liaison (the faculty member teaching the associated field course), and Field Office as needed to address field related concerns.

Field Site Criteria & Responsibilities

Field Sites are reviewed and approved based on their ability to meet the following expectations:

Field Site Criteria

- Must complete an Affiliation Agreement with PennWest University prior to the start of the internship.
- Must be able to provide a qualified MSW staff member to serve as the student's Field Instructor OR provide a staff member to serve as the student's Task Supervisor if a qualified MSW is not available at the agency.
- Views participation in the education of MSW students as a worthwhile activity and agrees to support the mission, goals, and objectives of the MSW Program.
- Is competent in providing professional services and offers a climate that promotes graduate learning and professional development.
- Views students as both learners and active participants in the professional life of the site.
- Offers learning experiences appropriate to graduate level social work field education.

Field Site Responsibilities

- ✚ Permits the Field Instructor adequate time to engage in the student's field instruction.
- ✚ Orients the student to the site including its history, purpose, structure, policy, procedures, ethical standards, and safety practices.
- ✚ Provides adequate resources for the student to complete assigned tasks including office space, office supplies, telephone access, and clerical support. Ideally, the site provides a workspace comparable to what the site provides to staff.
- ✚ Invites the student to participate in conferences, consultations, and staff meetings within the agency and the community when possible.
- ✚ Provides insurance coverage for students who are expected to use personal vehicles for agency purposes.

University Policy: If the Field Site requires students to utilize their personal or agency vehicles as part of the duties being performed, the agency must indemnify and hold the University harmless, and indemnify any student required to utilize their personal vehicle as part of the field placement assignment (e.g. students who are required to transport clients). If a student is utilizing the agency's vehicle, the agency assumes full financial liability, loss, or damage responsibility while the student is performing agency duties. Proof of insurance/indemnification must be submitted to the Field Office before any such transportation takes place. The agency is also responsible for verifying students have a valid driver's license and for checking their driver history.

There is no guarantee that the Field Office will be able to approve or finalize a placement for students. Additionally, there are differences among states, provinces, and countries about internship and licensure requirements, and you are responsible for understanding these differences and working with the Field Office and your Faculty Liaison to ensure your potential Field Site will be able to meet these requirements.

MSW Field Instructor Criteria & Responsibilities

The MSW Field Instructor is a qualified social worker who provides the student with supervision and mentorship. The Field Instructor plays a central role to student learning and acquisition of social work competencies and facilitates student understanding and application of social work values, skills, and ethics.

Field Instructor Criteria

- Holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program.
 - This requirement *cannot* be waived. No other degree will be considered.
 - Licensure is *not* required.
- Has a minimum of two years post-MSW practice experience.
- Exemplifies practice consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Is committed to the values and ethics of the social work profession.
- Demonstrates competence in social work practice.
- Has an interest in supporting student education.
- Has the ability and expertise to assess graduate student progress in meeting social work practice competencies.
- Is accessible to the student on a regular basis.
- Is committed to meeting all documentation, supervision, and evaluation requirements of the MSW program.
- In accordance with accreditation standards, Field Instructors should not supervise more than five (5) students at a time.

Field Instructor Responsibilities

- ✚ Meets at least once per week with the student for a minimum of 1 hour of uninterrupted field supervision (either in person or via video conference).
- ✚ Meets with the student and Faculty Liaison for a virtual site visit. This is normally conducted at least once a semester.
- ✚ Reviews field educator orientation and support materials provided by the MSW Field Office, and becomes familiarized with essential roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the MSW Field Program.
- ✚ Assigns responsibilities that are appropriate to the student's educational level and that are increasingly challenging; provides opportunities for the student to apply a broad range of social work knowledge and skills; and explains what they expect from the student.
- ✚ Collaborates with the student to develop the Field Learning Plan; monitors the student's progress and provides regular constructive feedback to the student; and evaluates the student's performance in a fair, respectful, rigorous, and thorough manner using the evaluative criteria established by the MSW Program.
- ✚ Uses Experiential Learning Cloud to complete program related tasks and documents.
- ✚ Contacts the Faculty Liaison and/or the MSW Field Office about student issues or concerns.
- ✚ In cases where the Field Instructor is the same person as the student's employment supervisor, supervision time for field education learning must be separate from supervision time for employment.
- ✚ If the Field Instructor is not a staff member of the Field Site, then they will work collaboratively with the approved on-site Task Supervisor to assure the student's success.

Task Supervisor Criteria & Responsibilities

In situations where the student's MSW Field Instructor works in a different department, program, or organization as the student's Field Site, it is required that the student identify someone from the organization to serve as their Task Supervisor. This person does not replace the Field Instructor but helps support the student and provides additional supervision as needed. The Task Supervisor is *not* required to have an MSW degree or any other degree.

Task Supervisor Criteria

- Is an agency employee.
- Oversees the student's day-to-day activities at the field site.
- Has an interest in supporting student education.
- Is accessible to the student on a regular basis.
- Is committed to meeting all documentation and evaluation requirements of the MSW program.

Task Supervisor Responsibilities

- ✚ Provides secondary field instruction and on-site guidance to the student on tasks and activities as delegated and monitored by the Field Instructor.
- ✚ Reviews field educator orientation and support materials provided by the MSW Field Office, and becomes familiarized with essential roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the MSW Field Program.
- ✚ Meets with the student and Faculty Liaison for a virtual site visit. This is normally conducted at least once a semester.
- ✚ Collaborates with the student and Field Instructor to develop the Field Learning Plan, monitor the student's progress, and provide regular constructive feedback to the student.
- ✚ Works in collaboration with the student and the Field Instructor to ensure the student meets learning goals; keeps the Field Instructor informed of the student's progress; provides input on the student's evaluation; and participates in site visits if requested.
- ✚ Reviews orientation and other materials provided by the Field Education Office, and becomes familiarized with essential roles, responsibilities, and expectations of the Field Program.
- ✚ Uses Experiential Learning Cloud to complete program related tasks and documents.
- ✚ Contacts the Field Instructor and the Faculty Liaison and/or the MSW Field Office about student issues or concerns.

The PennWest MSW Program strives to integrate Field Instructors and Task Supervisors into its culture and support their professional development by offering free training and seminars related to field education and the profession. The MSW Program will invite Field Instructors and Task Supervisors to continuing education program sponsored by the MSW Program and provide CEUs when possible.

Faculty Liaison Criteria & Responsibilities

The Faculty Liaison is the professor from the PennWest MSW Program who teaches field education courses: SOWK 6800, 7800, and 7810. They may be listed as “Program Faculty” on student forms in Experiential Learning Cloud. They carry the most responsibility regarding the design, implementation, and evaluation of the field education experience including monitoring student supervision and hours.

Faculty Liaison Criteria

- Holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program.
- Has a minimum of two years post-MSW practice experience.
- Is a PennWest faculty member.

Faculty Liaison Responsibilities

- ✚ Teaches the associated field course (i.e., SOWK 6800, 7800, 7810).
- ✚ Determines the student’s final course grade.
- ✚ Serves as the student’s primary contact for issues related to successful completion of field requirements.
- ✚ Communicates regularly with students, Field Instructors, and Task Supervisors.
- ✚ Conducts virtual site visits with the student and their Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if relevant) at least once per semester.
- ✚ Uses Experiential Learning Cloud to communicate, monitor, and assess the field education of their students.
- ✚ Collaborates with the MSW Field Office to address any field education issues or disruptions.
- ✚ Participates in Field Education Committee meetings and helps shape field curriculum and policies.

MSW Field Education Office Responsibilities

The key personnel in the Field Office are the MSW Field Director and the Field Management Technician.

MSW Field Director Criteria

- Holds a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program.
- Has a minimum of two years post-MSW practice experience.
- Is a PennWest faculty member with a full-time appointment to the MSW Program.

MSW Field Director Responsibilities

- ✚ Oversees the MSW Field Education program and ensures it meets all CSWE accreditation standards.
- ✚ Provides leadership in MSW field curriculum development and implementation.
- ✚ Provides leadership in MSW field policy development and implementation
- ✚ Establishes and monitors educational outcomes of the Field Program.
- ✚ Develops and co-facilitates orientation, training, and information sessions for Students, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, and Faculty Liaisons.

- ✚ Communicates with students and stakeholders via email, phone, and virtual meetings as needed/requested to maintain regular contact and provide support.
- ✚ Advises, tracks, and supports students throughout the field education experience.
- ✚ Reviews and approves field sites and field educator credentials.
- ✚ Collaboratively recruits, approves, and maintains communication with Field Sites.
- ✚ Manages a database of current and former Field Sites.
- ✚ Manages Experiential Learning Cloud, the Field Management System.
- ✚ Manages field course registration.
- ✚ Collaborates with the Field Management Technician to ensure Affiliation Agreements are initiated, finalized, updated, and within programmatic and accreditation standards.
- ✚ Addresses disruptions to field education.
- ✚ Conducts field-related Professional Standards Reviews.
- ✚ Manages field-related complaints and concerns.

Field Management Technician Criteria

- Full-time PennWest staff member.
- A Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program is preferred.

Field Management Technician Responsibilities

- ✚ Provides essential administrative support for the MSW Field Education Program.
- ✚ Ensures all field agencies have a signed Affiliation Agreement at the time students begin their internships.
- ✚ Assists students in navigating the field placement process.
- ✚ Manages field records.
- ✚ Communicates with students, faculty, field sites, and field educators.
- ✚ Participates in regular field team and field committee meetings.
- ✚ Co-facilitates field orientation, training, and information sessions.
- ✚ Develops and maintains partnerships with social service organizations.
- ✚ Ensures compliance with accreditation and program standards for field placements.

The MSW Field Office reserves the right to deny, delay, or terminate a student's field placement if they are not meeting the academic or professional standards of this program.

Dual Roles and Relationships

Dual roles occur when an individual simultaneously occupies more than one role, potentially leading to conflicts of interest, compromised professional boundaries, and ethical dilemmas. Dual roles should be avoided to maintain ethical standards and ensure the integrity of the educational experience for social work students, MSW Field Instructors, and Faculty Liaisons.

Students are required to disclose any dual relationships to the MSW Field Office and Faculty Liaison. Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, and Faculty Liaisons should disclose any potential conflicts of interest arising from dual roles or relationships that could impact their ability to evaluate student progress or address academic concerns and seek guidance from the MSW Field Office if such issues arise.

PennWest faculty will not serve in dual roles within the social work program. If a PennWest student is engaged as a field student at a business, agency, organization, consulting firm, or other LLC or LLP owned by a faculty member of PennWest, that same faculty member will not serve as the field

Part 7: Field Education Course Requirements

This section summarizes activities and assignments students are required to complete during their associated field education courses as well as information on student evaluation and course grading. Students will receive a syllabus on the first day of each field course which provides more detailed information. The syllabus should be shared with their Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor if needed). All requirements must be successfully completed for the student to earn a passing grade in the associated field course.

First Week Attendance

This assignment provides an opportunity for students to introduce themselves and their field agency. This assignment is completed in D2L/Brightspace.

Safety Assessment

At the start of each semester, students are required to complete a Safety Assessment in Experiential Learning Cloud to ensure their awareness of safety procedures at their field site. The Safety Assessment prompts students to discuss safety concerns that may arise with their MSW Field Instructor and Task Supervisor (if applicable). Students will also review the Student Safety in the Field section of this manual with their Field Instructor as part of the Safety Assessment assignment.

Reflective Journal

Reflection is essential to the continual professional development of social workers. Sharing practice reflections and providing feedback to peers' reflections provides opportunities to relate course content to the field setting; make connections to the Learning Plan; inform supervision and site visit discussions; develop insight into role and identity as a social worker; assess progress; connect with classmates; and hone interpersonal and professional communication skills by providing feedback to peers. Reflective Journal posts are completed in D2L/Brightspace.

Check-Ins

Check-ins provide an opportunity for students to communicate individually, privately, and regularly with their Faculty Liaison as they reflect on their learning to help track student progress, individualize their learning, and ensure their success in the course. Check-Ins comprise short answer questions about course content, course experiences, and progress on assignments and are completed in D2L/Brightspace.

Timesheet Reports

Timely and professional completion of documentation is an essential social work skill. Students will use the Timesheets in Experiential Learning Cloud to track their weekly field and supervision hours. Every 4 weeks students must also generate a cumulative Timesheet Report and submit it for approval by their MSW Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor, if applicable) and their Faculty Liaison.

Learning Plan

The Field Learning Plan is a written agreement jointly developed by the student and their Field Instructor. The field placement experience centers on this agreement which helps set learning goals, track progress, and assess learning related to the nine generalist or specialized competencies. The Learning Plan is completed in Experiential Learning Cloud and the tasks on the plan will automatically populate into the Final Evaluation.

Midterm Progress Report

The Mid-Term Progress Report provides an opportunity for the Field Instructor to provide feedback on student progress to date on the individual learning goals outlined in the Learning Plan. This assignment is completed in Experiential Learning Cloud.

Virtual Site Visit

The Virtual Site Visit provides an opportunity for the student, Faculty Liaison, Field Instructor (and Task Supervisor if needed) to discuss the student's field experiences and to ensure their learning goals are being met. Site visits are coordinated by the student and are conducted synchronously via Zoom or Teams at least once per semester. Virtual Site Visits are typically scheduled for 30-60 minutes.

Final Evaluation

The Final Evaluation assesses student mastery of the nine generalist or specialized competencies based on the individual learning goals outlined in the Learning Plan. Students are expected to demonstrate growth during the semester and to achieve ratings of 3 or 4 on all practice behaviors on the final evaluation. A score of 0 is considered unacceptable for the final evaluation. If a student is unable to complete any of activities/tasks in their Learning Plan, the Learning Plan should be revised. A rating of 0 on the final evaluation will negatively impact the final grade and may result in course failure.

It is important that the Field Instructor or Task Supervisor notify the Faculty Liaison immediately if there is any indication that the student's performance is less than satisfactory. The sooner concerns are raised, the sooner they can be addressed.

Final Evaluation Rubric

The PennWest MSW Program has developed a detailed rubric to support field educators in assessing student competencies and practice behaviors. Students are evaluated on each competency behavior using the rubric below which provides a performance description, a rating description, and examples for each score/performance rating category.

Final Evaluation Rubric

Score	Rating	Performance Description	Rating Description	Examples
4	Exemplary Performance	Student demonstrates sophisticated and innovative application of knowledge, values, and skills related to performance of the practice behavior.	A score of 4 is considered an excellent score for a student in their foundation or advanced field placement.	The student takes initiative in supervision by regularly sharing about their tasks and cases, talking through social work values, and showing up consistently to meetings. They're thoughtful about how they apply values, ethics, and grow professionally in their work. They also show strong self-awareness across the competency areas and often look for extra ways to build skills.
3	Advanced Performance	Student demonstrates effective application of knowledge, values, and skills related to performance of the practice behavior.	A score of 3 is considered a higher-than-average score for a student in their foundation field placement and a minimum score for a student in their advanced field placement.	The student takes part in supervision by sharing about their tasks and cases, exploring social work values, and consistently attending meetings. They sometimes need gentle prompts to reflect more deeply on how they're applying values, ethics, and growing in their practice. They show steady self-awareness across the competency areas and are developing independently.
2	Foundational Performance	Student demonstrates adequate application of knowledge, values, and skills related to performance of the practice behavior.	A score of 2 is considered a minimum score for a student in their foundation field placement and a low score for a student in their advanced field placement.	The student is beginning to engage in supervision by sharing about their tasks and cases, exploring social work values, and attending meetings regularly. They may need more support or reminders to reflect on how they're applying values, ethics, and developing professionally. While there are signs of growing self-awareness across the competency areas, this isn't yet consistent or fully independent.
1	Rudimentary Performance	Student demonstrates undeveloped application of apply knowledge, values, and skills related to performance of the practice behavior.	A score of 1 is considered a low score for a student in their foundation field placement and a very low score for a student in their advanced field placement.	The student is still developing their engagement in supervision and may need support in reflecting on how they're applying values, ethics, and professional growth in their practice. At this point, signs of self-awareness across the competency areas are limited, but there's room for growth with guidance and feedback.
0	Lacking Performance	Student has not demonstrated (or has not yet had opportunity to demonstrate) application of knowledge, values, and skills related to performance of the practice behavior.	A score of 0 is considered unacceptable for the final evaluation. A rating of 0 on the final will negatively impact the final course grade and may result in course failure.	Student has not been able to complete one or more activities/tasks in their Learning Plan. The Learning Plan should be revised so the student can be evaluated in this competency area.

Field Education Program Assessment

In addition to Field Learning Plan evaluation, the MSW program gathers additional information from students, MSW Field Instructors, and Faculty Liaisons to continuously improve the field education experience and the quality of the program. To this end, students are required to complete several program assessment instruments at the end of their Foundation and Advanced field placement to satisfy CSWE accreditation standards and to help inform program development. Field Instructors and Task Supervisors are also invited to complete a survey on field curriculum and on current trends in the social work practice community.

Field Education Course Grading

Important information about Field Education course grading:

- The Faculty Liaison assigns the student a grade for the associated field education internship course.
- The MSW Field Instructor and Task Supervisor do not assign the course grade, but the Faculty Liaison does consider their feedback along with other performance indicators including coursework.
- The Faculty Liaison makes course grading criteria clear to all parties at the start of the placement.
- The student must complete all required assignments and a minimum of 300 hours to receive credit for the associated field course.
- Students may earn only one C grade in a field course (i.e., SOWK 6800, 7800, or 7810). Students who earn more than one C grade in field courses or who earn a grade of C- or below in any field course may be dismissed from the MSW program.

Part 8: Student Safety in the Field

This section covers the safety policies and procedures designed to protect students during their field placements, including guidelines based on the NASW's "Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace" and site-specific safety protocols.

Safety Policy

The MSW Field Office is responsible for giving all students, Field Instructors, Task Supervisors, and Faculty Liaisons general written guidelines about safety during field placements. Our program recognizes that students cannot be completely shielded from risk when students provide real life services, especially when clients are in crisis. Our policies and procedures for supporting student safety account for the fact that students may lack professional experience and skills and therefore need support with assessing risk and taking appropriate precautions.

The MSW Program encourages agencies to provide students with the same level of safety considerations as they do for their staff—and sometimes even more. Each Field Site is expected to provide students with an orientation to the agency's safety policies and practices.

In accordance with NASW's (2013) [*Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace*](#), this safety orientation should cover topics such as:

- Reporting procedures for safety concerns
- Use of safety technologies and mobile phones
- Safety training and preparedness
- Building or office security
- Emergency procedures
- Transportation policies and auto insurance requirements
- Sexual harassment or discrimination policies and reporting procedures
- Home, school, or community visit safety
- Crisis intervention protocol
- Emergency and support contacts
- Any other relevant safety policies

If a student's safety concerns begin to impact their ability to learn, the Field Instructor (or Task Supervisor) should contact the Faculty Liaison or the MSW Field Office to address the issue and work toward a resolution that supports the student's well-being and learning goals.

Safety Procedures

All students are required to complete a Safety Assessment at the beginning of each semester of field with their Field Instructor which is then reviewed with the Faculty Liaison during the Virtual Site Visit. Students are also required to complete one or more Reflective Journal posts in which they address client, staff, and student safety. Additional safety-related requirements for all parties involved in field placement:

1. Students must read NASW's (2013) [*Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace*](#) prior to starting their field placement, discuss it during the Site Visit, and address it in course assignments and discussions.
2. Field Instructors and other organizational personnel as appropriate must discuss site specific safety and risk management criteria, policies, and procedures with students no later than the first week of Field Site placement as part of orientation.
3. Students must bring safety concerns to the attention of their Field Instructor throughout the field education experience.
4. If students feel that safety concerns are not addressed at their Field Site, they must inform their Field Liaison and other MSW Program personnel as needed to ensure their individual safety in the field.
5. Field Instructors and Task Supervisors must contact the Field Liaison and the MSW Field Office about any safety or human resources incidents or concerns regarding field students.

General Safety Guidelines

The following are general guidelines suggested by the MSW Program. Students should consider them in addition to NASW's (2013) [*Guidelines for Social Worker Safety in the Workplace*](#) and any guidelines discussed with Field Sites.

1. Field Site Specific Protocol

- It is important for students to know the Field Site's protocol for safety and security.
- Students should be informed about specific steps to take depending on the individual situation, the nature of the setting, etc.
- The Field Site should be aware of the student's schedule and whereabouts, especially when the student is working outside of the organization's workplace.

2. Security of Belongings

- The Field Site is responsible for providing students with a secure place to keep belongings while at placement. It is preferable that the space can be locked (such as a desk drawer or filing cabinet).
- Students should not leave cell phones, laptops, bags, and other personal articles visible and unattended, even in an office with the door closed.
- Students should not bring valuables to placement settings.

3. Safety Issues Related to Working with Clients

- Social work students work with clients in a range of settings and situations, including those with trauma and environmental stressors that result in behaviors that are threatening or appear to be threatening. These behaviors may include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Swearing,
 - b. Yelling,
 - c. Insulting,
 - d. Threatening or attempting to cause physical harm.
- Some individuals may be prone to becoming agitated, or possibly violent toward themselves or others, and may possess a weapon. Others may be intoxicated, affected by medications or other substances, in withdrawal, or may have other medical, psychiatric, or neurological conditions.
- We emphasize that students should always consult with their Field Instructor about preparing for and handling threatening or difficult situations. This may include:
 - a. Medical emergencies,
 - b. Suicide or homicide risks,
 - c. Potential abuse of others,
 - d. The presence of weapons.

4. Safety for Office Meetings

- It is important to consider what is in the room, whether there is more than one exit, and where each person will sit.
- When scheduling an appointment, it is helpful to think about whether other people should be near and available at the time of the meeting for help if needed.
- It is also important to have a plan for help if a client becomes agitated. This may include having another staff person in the meeting.

5. Safety for Travel

- When a student is traveling for field education activities, they should have clear directions and know where they are going.
- In general, the student should be alert and attentive to one's surroundings.
- When traveling, students should carry as little as possible. Students should carry money, license, and other essentials in a pocket if possible.
- If a bag or other personal item is grabbed, it is best to let go of it.
- Students should dress in comfortable clothes which are as supportive for mobility in a variety of environments as possible.
- It is helpful to be alert and move with a purpose, as if one has a clear destination.
- One should be aware of people in the immediate area without staring.

6. Safety for Home Visits

- Before making a home visit, the student should discuss any issues related to safety with their Field Instructor.
- On an initial home visit, one should go with another worker.
- Most agencies will want to know the location of home visits and when they occur. Some agencies require a confirmation call on arrival and departure from home visits.
- If the student feels unsafe upon arrival or at any time during the visit, they should not proceed with the meeting. It might be preferable to meet at a neutral location.

APPENDIX A: Full-Time MSW Faculty & Staff

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APPENDIX B: Course Descriptions

Core MSW Courses

SOWK 6000: Intro to Trauma-Informed Field Practice

Introduction to field policies and procedures to prepare students for foundation level field experience. Introduces foundational concepts and skills required to engage in trauma-informed practice and supervision using an intersectional and human rights-based approach to anti-oppressive social work framework.

SOWK 6100: Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE)

Introduces interdisciplinary theories of human development throughout the life cycle using a multidimensional, trauma-informed, person-in-environment framework that considers multiple determinants of human behavior and development. Examines the impact of human behavior and organizing across multiple levels of social work practice.

SOWK 6200: Diversity, Equity & Anti-Oppressive Practice

This foundational course focuses on building on students' knowledge and skills to engage in a trauma-informed, anti-oppressive practice. Students will apply this understanding to develop knowledge, skills, and values to enhance cultural humility and empathy at all levels of social work practice.

SOWK 6300: Social Work Practice with Individuals

Orients students to generalist social work practice skills, attitudes, and knowledge utilized when working with diverse individuals in a variety of settings. Course content focuses on the integration of social work values and ethics, the principles of trauma-informed care, and skill building throughout the planned change process.

SOWK 6400: Social Work Practice with Families and Groups

This course builds upon generalist social work practice skills by exploring the dynamics of diverse contemporary families and groups with an emphasis on the application of trauma-informed approaches to engagement and professional behavior. Students will enhance critical thinking and problem-solving skills used during the planned change process.

SOWK 6500: Social Work Practice w/Organizations & Communities

This course focuses on macro practice skills, behaviors, and knowledge that enable the generalist social worker to effect change at the organizational and community levels. Students will learn how to effectively implement the planned change process within organizations and the community.

SOWK 6600: Foundations in Social Work Policy Practice

Examines the relationship between social problems and social policy. Focuses on foundational skills in policy analysis and social work advocacy. Prepares students to be effective policy practitioners at the micro, mezzo and macro levels with an awareness of historical, social, cultural, economic, environmental and global influences.

SOWK 6700: Social Work Research

Focuses on quantitative and qualitative methods in social work with emphasis on problem conceptualization, measurement, design, and use of descriptive and inferential data analyses. In this foundation course, students acquire skills to understand knowledge creation and evidence-based practice in social work.

SOWK 6800: Foundation Social Work Field

During this course, students will complete an MSW-supervised field placement (300 hours minimum) within an organization that provides opportunities for generalist social work practice. The foundation field learning experience addresses all CSWE generalist practice competencies across diverse micro, mezzo, and macro practice settings.

SOWK 7100: Differential Assessment & Psychopathology

Focuses on differential mental health assessment with diverse clients and constituencies. Examines human differences and assesses levels of functioning within the context of various systems. Students learn and practice advanced skills in assessing, diagnosing, and referring clients using a trauma-informed lens.

SOWK 7600: Advanced Social Work Policy Practice

Policy and funding shape program design and service delivery. Students will develop practical advanced skills to analyze and synthesize organizational and public policy to build a case for social change through a trauma-informed lens. Emphasis on change strategies, evidence and promising practices, and identifying potential funders and influencers.

SOWK 7700: Trauma-Informed Practice Evaluation

Students develop advanced knowledge and skills in the evaluation of social work practice using a trauma-informed perspective. Theory and professional literature are integrated into social work evaluation design, measurement, sampling, data collection, and analyses for practice, policy, and organizational partnerships.

SOWK 7800: Advanced Social Work Field I

This is the first of two courses during which students complete an MSW-supervised placement (300 hours minimum) within an organization that provides opportunities to engage in advanced social work practice. The course integrates trauma-informed approaches across diverse social work levels and practice settings.

SOWK 7810: Advanced Social Work Field II

This is the second of two courses during which students complete an MSW-supervised placement (300 hours minimum) within an organization that provides opportunities to build upon advanced social work practice. The course helps students continue to integrate trauma-informed approaches across diverse social work levels and practice settings.

MSW Electives**SOWK 7510: Social Work Administration**

Explores theoretical and functional models to effectively manage human services organizations in an increasingly complex environment. Special attention is given to agency management with reference to human rights; social, economic, environmental, and global influences; and the development and maintenance of a trauma-informed agency culture.

SOWK 7520: Trauma Theory & Interventions

Provides an introduction to historical and theoretical frameworks for understanding various types of trauma, emphasizing the need for cultural humility when working with diverse populations. Explores treatment models and evidence-based practices used to address trauma and introduces skills necessary to assess, intervene, and evaluate outcomes.

SOWK 7530: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

Examines the fundamental theory, principles, and skills of cognitive-behavioral therapies. Teaches practical hands-on clinical skills. Students emerge with a thorough grounding in CBT methods and the capacity to integrate CBT into their current practices.

SOWK 7540: SW Practice in Substance Use & Addictive Disorders

Provides a framework for understanding substance use disorders and the relationships between trauma and addiction. Students will gain an understanding of intervention approaches with diverse individuals, their families, and communities. Addresses prevention, assessment, and recovery models at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

SOWK 7550: Social Work Practice in Mental Health

Examines direct social work practice in behavioral health across all systems. Course content will center on direct practice of integrated mental health in primary care settings with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Course will provide information on engagement, assessment, planning, and intervention.

SOWK 7580: Social Work Practice in Justice Systems

Overview of the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Emphasizes understanding of ever-changing philosophies undergirding the criminal justice system. Students will explore personal biases and experiences and culturally relevant, trauma-informed practices when working with clients in criminal justice systems.

SOWK 7590: Social Work Practice with Children and Youth

Examines the major problems and legal and clinical issues when working with children and youth. Special concern for trauma-informed practice with victimized and at-risk children. Students will explore personal biases and experiences, organizational barriers, and culturally relevant, trauma-informed practices when working with children and youth.

SOWK 7599: Special Topics in Social Work

This course offers a discussion of selected topics of significant or current importance and interest to the social work profession.

APPENDIX C: Generalist and Specialized Competencies

Generalist Competencies and Behaviors

Generalist Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social Workers:

- a) make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context;
- b) demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c) use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d) use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Generalist Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and

response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social Workers:

- a) advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b) engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Generalist Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social Workers:

- a) demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b) demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Generalist Competency 4: Engage In Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social Workers:

- a) apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b) identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Generalist Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social Workers:

- a) use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b) apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social Workers:

- a) apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b) use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Social Workers:

- a) apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and

- b) demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social Workers:

- a) engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b) incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

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

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social Workers:

- a) select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b) critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Specialized Competencies and Behaviors

PennWest MSW Program Area of Specialized Practice: Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice

Specialized Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Trauma-informed social workers recognize the importance of trauma-informed care principles in providing a framework for ethical and professional behavior when working with clients and client systems, especially those impacted by trauma, and when working on inter-professional teams across all levels of practice. Trauma-informed social workers demonstrate an awareness of ways in which their own direct and indirect trauma experiences may impact their professional judgement, communication, and behavior. Trauma-informed social workers understand the importance of self-care and utilize supervision as a method of reflective practice and ongoing learning to manage their own personal trauma responses and to ensure ethical and professional behavior.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) develop a self-care plan.
- b) identify signs of and strategies for managing direct and indirect trauma symptoms that may arise when working with clients and within organizations.

Specialized Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, & Environmental Justice

Trauma-informed social workers recognize the widespread prevalence and impact of individual, collective, and historical trauma in the world and understand ways in which these various forms of trauma intersect with and can be compounded by social, racial, economic, and environmental inequities and human rights violations. Trauma-informed social workers are cognizant of, and able to apply, trauma-informed care principles when identifying structural barriers and developing strategies to promote equity and justice and advance human rights for diverse clients and constituents.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) identify the effects of trauma, particularly historical trauma, on marginalized and disenfranchised groups, communities, and populations.
- b) engage in trauma-informed practices that contribute to the advancement of human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Specialized Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Trauma-informed social workers recognize that responsiveness to cultural, historical, and gender issues is one of the core principles of trauma-informed care. Trauma-informed social workers understand how various forms of trauma may impact individual and collective identity development and affect equity and inclusion. Trauma-informed social workers are aware of differential impacts

of trauma on individuals and groups who have experienced oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation related to economic, social, biological, cultural, gender identity, and other characteristics. Trauma-informed social workers apply trauma-informed care principles to engage in self-reflection to increase their self-awareness; to manage the influence of their own biases, power, privilege, and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies; and to develop and to enhance their cultural humility and empathy at all levels of social work practice.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) articulate ways in which trauma-informed principles are aligned with professional social work values and ethics, including anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- b) use supervision to reflect on their own biases, power, privilege, and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

Specialized Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Trauma-informed social work practitioners recognize the importance of trauma-informed care principles when engaging in practice-informed research and practice based on research findings. Trauma-informed social workers consider various forms of individual, collective, and historical trauma in their approach to designing, collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and evaluating research data. Trauma-informed social workers recognize that scientific inquiry must consider the intersections of culture, ethics, and trauma experiences to avoid retraumatization and revictimization when conducting research.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) identify research processes and procedures that may be retraumatizing.
- b) demonstrate ability to apply trauma-informed care principles when engaging in practice-informed research and practice based on research findings.

Specialized Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Trauma-informed social workers recognize the importance of trauma-informed care principles when engaging in policy practice. Trauma-informed social workers recognize how traumatic experiences intersect with, and can be compounded by, local, state, and federal policies. Trauma-informed care principles are applied by trauma-informed social workers in policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Trauma-informed social workers engage in trauma-informed policy practice across levels of practice appropriate to setting.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) identify policies and procedures that may be retraumatizing.
- b) promote policies that are congruent with trauma-informed care principles.

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

Trauma-informed social workers understand ways in which humans experience both harm and healing through relationships. Trauma-informed social workers integrate principles of trauma-informed care throughout the planned change process with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Trauma-informed social workers apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, trauma-informed care, the NASW Code of Ethics, and other applicable laws and regulations to inform ethical engagement and decision making with diverse clients and constituents.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) incorporate a trauma-informed approach to engagement with diverse clients and constituents.
- b) demonstrate effective engagement skills, strategies, and techniques with diverse clients and constituents that are congruent with trauma-informed care principles and practice.

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

Trauma-informed social workers understand ways in which humans experience both harm and healing through relationships. Trauma-informed social workers integrate principles of trauma-informed care throughout the planned change process with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Trauma-informed social workers understand the importance of screening for various forms of trauma and apply this knowledge to facilitate assessment with diverse clients and constituents.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) incorporate a trauma-informed approach to assessment with diverse clients and constituents.
- b) apply principles and methods of case conceptualization, assessment, and diagnosis of mental and emotional statuses of diverse individuals using a strengths-based, trauma-informed lens.

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

Trauma-informed social workers understand ways in which humans experience both harm and healing through relationships. Trauma-informed social workers integrate principles of trauma-informed care throughout the planned change process with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Trauma-informed social workers understand the importance of and the differences between trauma-informed (macro/mezzo) and trauma-specific services/treatments (micro level) interventions and apply this knowledge to achieve mutually agreed upon goals with diverse clients and constituents.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) incorporate a trauma-informed approach to interventions with diverse clients and constituents.
- b) collaborate with diverse clients and constituents to develop trauma-informed intervention goals and objectives that capture strengths, needs, and challenges.

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

Trauma-informed social workers understand ways in which humans experience both harm and healing through relationships. Trauma-informed social workers integrate principles of trauma-informed care throughout the planned change process with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Trauma-informed social workers understand evaluation is an ongoing process and apply this knowledge to facilitate appropriate trauma-informed practice evaluation with diverse clients and constituents to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness.

Trauma-informed social workers:

- a) incorporate a trauma-informed approach to practice evaluation with diverse clients and constituents.
- b) apply evaluation findings to improve trauma-informed care practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

APPENDIX D: Professional Standards Form

This form is a tool to help you continue to develop your professional identity, thereby laying a strong foundation for your career as an effective social worker by aligning your behaviors and skills with the standards of the social work profession. We have created this form as a means of checking in when issues are noted with professional behaviors in the classroom or field setting.

Social workers are held to certain professional standards in the field. In the BSW and MSW programs, therefore, students are also held to professional standards. When a student receives a failing grade and/or if a supervisor notes an issue with a social worker's behavior or job performance in the field, it is typical for a review to be conducted and a corrective action plan to be put into place. This form is to be used in a parallel process to be applied within the classroom or field setting.

Student:

Date:

Faculty member:

Course:

Professional Standard 1: Academic Performance

×	Expectation	Comments
	A. Plans and organizes work effectively	
	B. Turns in complete assignments on time	
	C. Makes arrangements for special needs	
	D. Attends class/field regularly	
	E. Demonstrates use of critical thinking skills	

Professional Standard 2: Conduct/Behavior

x	Expectation	Comments
	A. Demonstrates ability to work cooperatively with others	
	B. Actively participates in class discussion groups/ role plays/field activities	
	C. Shows respect for others' opinions	
	D. Is open to feedback from peers/faculty/field instructors	
	E. Demonstrates a willingness to respect and understand people across all intersections of diversity, including but not limited to race, color, gender, age, creed, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, and populations at risk	
	F. Conducts her/himself according to the NASW Code of Ethics	
	G. Appropriately credits others' work (examples: proper quoting and paraphrasing of sources, accurately representing the division of labor for group projects)	
	H. Other indicators of concern related to conduct/behavior	

Professional Standard 3: Emotional Self-Control (Self-Understanding)

x	Expectation	Comments
	A. Uses self-disclosure appropriately (e.g., student seems to have an understanding of and has resolved the issue they are sharing)	
	B. Appears to be able to handle discussion of uncomfortable topics	

	C. Deals appropriately in class/field with issues which arouse emotions	
	D. Understands the effects of one's behavior on others	
	E. Does not allow personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with professional/academic judgment and performance	
	F. Other indicators of concern related to emotional self-control (self-understanding)	

Professional Standard 4: Communication Skills

x	Expectation	Comments
	A. Written assignments demonstrate good spelling, appropriate use of punctuation, clear structure, paragraphing, good organization, and follow logical sequence	
	B. Demonstrates ability to use APA style, including citations, formatting, and other style requirements	
	C. Demonstrates ability to write effectively in records	
	D. Demonstrates a working proficiency of the English language in written communication	
	E. Shows professionalism in all written communication, including (but not limited to) written communications using social media, and electronic communications.	
	F. Is able to clearly articulate ideas, thoughts, and concepts verbally	

	G. Has the ability to communicate verbally in a clear manner	
	H. Demonstrates a working proficiency of the English language in verbal communication	
	I. Shows professionalism in all verbal communication	
	J. Other indicators of concern related to communication skills	

Corrective Plan

Action steps to be taken and time frame for completion:

Student response, if desired:

Date of follow-up meeting, if applicable:

Student's signature:

Date:

Faculty member's signature:

Date:

Outcomes/feedback from follow-up meeting, if applicable:

Student's signature:

Date:

Faculty member's signature:

Date:

If the student is unwilling or unable to address the identified behaviors within the established time frame, additional steps may be taken by social work faculty, up to and including possible removal from the social work program.

Copies of this form should go to the student, the faculty member, and into the student's file.

APPENDIX E: Drug Use Policy BSW/MSW Programs at PennWest

I. Intent

This policy outlines the expectations and regulations regarding drug use, including medical marijuana, for students in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) and Masters of Social Work (MSW) programs at Pennsylvania Western (PennWest) University.

II. Coverage

This policy applies to all students in the BSW and MSW programs at Pennsylvania Western University.

III. Body of Policy

This policy upholds PennWest Policy FA049: Alcohol and Drugs. It provides further regulations for students when enrolled in field placement.

General Drug Use Policy:

Students are prohibited from using, possessing, distributing, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol while engaged in field placements, on institutional premises, or while representing their field placement or the social work program in any official capacity.

Medical Marijuana Policy:

Patients who reside in Pennsylvania can qualify for medical cannabis if they have a terminal illness or if they suffer from certain medical conditions. However, marijuana is still a prohibited substance federally under the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). PennWest University also abides by the federal Drug-Free Workplace Act and the Federal Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments, which require that "as a condition of receiving funds or any other form of financial assistance under any federal program, an institution of higher education or state/local educational agency must certify that it has adopted and implemented a program to prevent the unlawful manufacture, possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol by students.

Medical marijuana is not a reasonable accommodation under the ADA for students with disabilities, as marijuana is an illegal drug under the federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. § 812(c).

Drug Testing and Compliance:

1. Students may be required to undergo drug testing as a condition of their field placement and must comply with all institutional and site-specific drug testing policies.
2. Field placement sites have the authority to decline any student who does not pass their drug test. Field placement sites also have the authority to obtain any requested supporting documentation.
3. A positive drug test for unauthorized substances, including medical marijuana, may result in disciplinary action.
4. Any student refusing a required drug test or found violating this policy may be subject to removal from their field placement site and possible dismissal from the social work program.

Consequences of Policy Violation

Failure to comply with this policy may result in any – or any combination – of the following: removal from the field placement site, completion of a professional development review, or disciplinary action from the University. Egregious behavior may result in immediate program dismissal. If adjustments are made to a student's plan of study as a result of being in violation of this policy, the student may face financial implications or delayed graduation.

IV. Authority

All department faculty have had an opportunity to review and provide feedback to this policy. It shall remain in force until revised or replaced.

APPENDIX F: PennWest MSW Advanced Standing Policy

Purpose:

The Advanced Standing pathway within the Master of Social Work (MSW) program is designed to recognize the prior academic achievements of students who have earned a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited institution. This policy outlines the eligibility criteria, application requirements, and curriculum expectations for students pursuing advanced standing status.

Eligibility Criteria:

To qualify for the Advanced Standing MSW program, applicants must:

1. Hold a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a CSWE-accredited institution, awarded within the past five years.
2. Have a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, or demonstrate sufficient academic readiness through additional coursework or professional experience.
3. Provide evidence of satisfactory completion of a generalist social work practicum as part of the BSW curriculum, verified by official documentation.
4. Submit strong letters of recommendation from academic faculty and/or field instructors attesting to the applicant's competence in generalist social work practice.
5. Demonstrate a commitment to social work values and ethical practice through a personal statement or essay.

Application Requirements:

1. Completed application to the MSW program, indicating interest in the Advanced Standing program.
2. Official transcripts from all post-secondary institutions attended.
3. Three letters of recommendation.
4. A personal statement outlining professional goals, commitment to social work ethics/principles and how the Advanced Standing MSW program aligns with career aspirations.
5. A résumé or curriculum vitae detailing relevant work experience.

Program Structure and Curriculum Expectations:

1. Advanced Standing students bypass the generalist year of the MSW program and enter directly into the specialized coursework.
2. Students must complete a minimum of 33 credit hours of advanced coursework, including specialized field education.

3. A minimum of 600 hours of specialized field placement is required, ensuring competency in advanced practice settings.
4. Advanced Standing students are expected to complete the program within one academic year (full-time) or within two years (part-time), as outlined by their plan of study.
5. Students must maintain a minimum GPA of 3.0 and adhere to all professional and ethical standards as defined by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), and University Academic Policies.

Additional Considerations:

- Admission to the Advanced Standing program is competitive and based on a holistic review of the applicant's academic record, professional experience, and demonstrated readiness for advanced social work practice.
- Transfer credits from another MSW program may be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to program approval.

Policy Review and Amendments:

This policy is subject to periodic review to ensure alignment with CSWE accreditation standards and best practices in social work education. Any amendments will be communicated to current and prospective students through official university channels.

APPENDIX G: School Social Worker Certification

For MSW students who are interested in pursuing school social work, we have an understanding with Kutztown and have referred them to their program as a fellow PASSHE school. Below is a link with information:

<https://www.kutztown.edu/academics/colleges-and-departments/liberal-arts-and-sciences/departments/social-work/school-social-work-certificate.html>