Middle Tennessee State University
Master of Social Work Program

Student Handbook

AY 2021-2022
Welcome to the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work (MTSU-MSW) Program. The program is designed for the working professional, with some courses offered on-campus in the evening and others offered online. It can be completed on a full-time or a part-time basis.

The MTSU-MSW program prepares students for Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice. We are frequently asked: What is Advanced Generalist Social Work? And, how does the concentration of Advanced Generalist impact the jobs for which I will be eligible? The advanced generalist concentration provides a generalist specialty area for the student. A clinical or direct practice concentration prepares students for clinical or direct service work with clients. An administrative concentration prepares students to provide indirect services. The advanced generalist concentration prepares students to work with both direct and indirect services.

Agency-based internships are a vital part of MSW students’ learning. The MTSU-MSW Program is pleased to be able to offer a wide variety of agencies that can serve as field education sites. Students complete 900 hours during their two internship experiences. Employment-based internships are encouraged for those already working in a social work setting, as long as a new learning experience can be provided.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is the accrediting body for Social Work. The MTSU-MSW Program is fully accredited by CSWE. Graduates with a CSWE accredited degree are eligible for licensure as a social worker.

As a MSW student, you will be encouraged to pursue your own interests and goals as well as
those of the program in order to become an active and independent learner. Each member of the MTSU-MSW faculty stands ready to assist you, and we look forward to establishing a team effort towards your social work education and social work career.

This handbook is intended to:

- acquaint prospective applicants with the MSW program
- serve as a reference for students
- supplement the university catalog

We look forward to working with you and getting to know you.

Faculty & Staff
MTSU MSW Program
## Table of Contents

Mission Statement 1  
MTSU-MSW Program Goals 1  
MTSU-MSW Program Competencies 1  
The MTSU-MSW Program’s Advanced Generalist Model 2  
Admission to the MTSU-MSW Program 3  
Financial Aid 3  
Curriculum Design 4  
Degree Plan – Program of Study 7  
Advisement Policies and Procedures 8  
Admission to Field 8  
Admission to Candidacy 9  
Comprehensive Examination 9  
Graduation Requirements 9  
Counseling Out 10  
Students’ Rights and Responsibilities 10  
Student Participation 10  
Grade Appeal 11  
Academic Integrity 11  
Reasonable Accommodations for Students with Disabilities 12  
Reporting of Unofficial Withdrawals 12  
Non-Discrimination Policy 12  
Policy on Harassment 13  
Access to Educational Records 13  
Exceptions to MTSU-MSW Program Policies 13  
Student and Professional Organizations 14  
Awards/Scholarships 15  
Social Work Advisory Board 16  
Grievance Procedure 16  
APPENDIX: MTSU-MSW Program Policies
MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the MSW Social Work Program at Middle Tennessee State University is to provide a learning environment where students are taught to think critically, be creative, participate actively in their education, and grow as individuals while respecting the rapidly changing and diverse world in which they will live and practice social work. We believe classwork and special student work experiences must demonstrate how to relate effectively to all types of people and to appreciate how emotional, social, economic, political, and spiritual forces influence the behavior of those we are helping. Our goal is to utilize the best current evidence-based methods develop competent, ethical professionals who exhibit the capacity for scientific inquiry, and have the knowledge, values and skills for effective practice with individuals, families, groups, agencies, communities, inform and develop local, state and national / international policy, and provide outstanding leadership in the field of social services.

MTSU-MSW PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the program are developed directly from the defined mission, purposes of social work education, and the body of social work literature on the efficacy of the advanced generalist model for professional social work practice. To fulfill the mission, the goals of the MSW program are:

1. To prepare a competent, diverse student population for advanced generalist social work practice based on professional values and ethics to serve client systems within each level of practice.
2. To provide the knowledge and skills necessary to promote the development of and advocacy for of social policies and services that reduce the impact of poverty, oppression, and discrimination, and ensure social, environment, and economic justice across systems.
3. To provide a teaching environment that ensures the development of analytical skills and critical thinking as part of social work practice.
4. Support knowledge acquisition through active participation in the development, evaluation, and improvement of social work knowledge and skills via research aimed at advancing social work practice.
5. To promote the development of a multiple theoretical orientation applicable across systems and levels of practice that supports competency as advanced generalist social work professionals.
6. To provide an understanding of diversity and cultural competence, from a lens of cultural humility and with an emphasis on social justice, empowerment, and improving the well-being of people.
7. To instill in students the history, purpose and philosophical underpinning reflected in the profession of social work, and develop professional leadership skills across service delivery systems.

MTSU-MSW PROGRAM COMPETENCIES

The MTSU-MSW Program’s mission and goals inform the design and organization of the curriculum. Courses in the foundation and concentration curricula contribute to students’ achievement of the following competencies, which, in turn, advances the MTSU-MSW
The MTSU-MSW Program’s attainment of its goals.

1. Demonstrate Ethical & Professional Behavior
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
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 MTSU-MSW PROGRAM’S ADVANCED GENERALIST MODEL

The MTSU-MSW Program assumes two levels of professional preparation: foundation-level generalist social work practice and advanced generalist social work practice. The advanced generalist level is distinguished by increased complexity and range of knowledge, depth of analysis, and expertise in skills reflected in preparation for advanced practice roles. This program prepares students for advanced generalist social work practice.

Advanced generalist practice is practice that is autonomous, focused on public social service settings, and concerned with the enhancement of human well-being, diversity, and social justice, especially with children and families. Advanced generalist practitioners should be able to analyze and resolve more complex ethical and value conflicts, apply empirically-based interventions to micro, mezzo, and macro practice situations, and use research methods to evaluate their own practice and to contribute to the profession’s knowledge base. Advanced generalist practitioners should be able to integrate knowledge, theories, and practice in such a way as to eventually model and instruct others in the profession.
The following figure illustrates our Advanced Generalist Practice Model

ADVANCED GENERALIST

- increased knowledge of theories & models for practice with individuals/families/groups/organizations/communities
- increased skills to address complex direct practice issues including individual/family/group techniques
- increased awareness of the needs, potentials, and influences of systems of public social services
- increased ability to use, engage in, and analyze theoretical & practice research and evaluation
- abilities to conduct discipline and systematic eclectic practice via extrapolation, synthesis and refinement of generalist competencies
- increased skills to address complex indirect practice issues including supervision/administration/policy practice and program evaluation
- increased capacity to build or link scarce resources in the environment
- added emphasis on client system strengths and empowerment

FOUNDATION GENERALIST

PERSPECTIVE
- Ecosystems perspective
- Openness in theory & methods
- Indirect & direct intervention
- Client centered perspective
- Evidence based practice
- Commitment to democracy, humanism, & empowerment

COMPETENCIES
- Ethics & Professionalism
- Diversity & Difference
- Human Rights & SEEJ
- Practice/Research Continuum
- Policy Practice
- Engage with IFGOC
- Assess IFGOC
- Intervene IFGOC
- Evaluate IFGOC

LIBERAL ARTS
- Self-Awareness
- Valuing Others
- Cultural Literacy
- Appreciation of Arts
- Communication Skills
- Understanding social change & gov’t
ADMISSION TO THE MTSU-MSW PROGRAM

In addition to the standard institutional requirements for admission to the graduate college, individuals must also submit an application to the Department of Social Work. Information about the application process is available online at:

MTSU  http://www.mtsu.edu/socialwork/msw.php

The Department of Social Work application for the MSW Program consists of:

- A completed MSW Application Form, which includes an essay.
- Three (3) reference forms to be completed by professionals who can address the applicant's interest in social work, potential for successfully completing a master’s program, and potential for professional social work practice.

Applicants interested in obtaining Advanced Standing must have: a) completed a Bachelor of Social Work degree from a CSWE-accredited program, and b) attained a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.00 in their undergraduate course work. International students who hold a baccalaureate degree from a social work program outside the U.S. must have their transcript reviewed by CSWE for a determination of equivalency.

Applicants should be aware that, consistent with CSWE standards, the MTSU-MSW Program does not grant academic credits for life, volunteer, or work experience.

Applicants who have successfully completed graduate coursework at an accredited college or university in a discipline other than social work may be able to transfer up to nine (9) credits of elective coursework.

Those who have successfully completed graduate coursework in social work at a program accredited by CSWE should contact the Department of Social Work for information on transferring credits.

FINANCIAL AID

A number of loan programs are available to eligible students. Individuals also may qualify for the federal work-study program. A limited number of assistantships and fellowships are available.

General information about financial aid alternatives can be found online at:

MTSU  http://www.mtsu.edu/financial-aid/

For more information about financial aid, students are encouraged to contact the Financial Aid Office.
CURRICULUM DESIGN

The MTSU-MSW Program’s curriculum prepares students to engage in advanced generalist social work practice. The curriculum is designed so that by the time students graduate they will have acquired the knowledge, skills, and professional values to allow them to meet the needs of the region and enhance human well-being, diversity, and social justice through developing and improving systems of public social services, especially for children and families. Classroom and field-based learning reinforce each other, allowing students to develop the competencies required of advanced generalist social work practitioners.

The first 30 credits of the MTSU-MSW Program’s curriculum constitute students’ foundation education experience. Foundation-level courses and field education equip students with the knowledge, skills, and professional values that form the core of generalist social work practice. The advanced generalist concentration curriculum, which entails 30 credits, builds on students’ foundation learning and offers more advanced course work and field education experiences.

Students admitted to the MTSU-MSW Program with advanced standing are given credit for the foundation curriculum’s course and field education requirements. Advanced standing students complete the course and field education requirements of the 30-credit concentration curriculum.

Students without advanced standing who enter the program with a strong background in content covered by certain foundation courses have the option of taking an examination to be exempt from those courses. Exemption from a foundation course is by examination only, and exemption exams are only available for specific courses. Exemption from a foundation course does not reduce the number of credits a student must complete to satisfy the requirements for the MSW degree; additional elective coursework can be taken to satisfy the 60 credits needed for graduation.

Registration for MSW courses is by permission of the department. The specific courses that make up the Foundation and Concentration curricula are described below.

Foundation Courses (Foundation courses are restricted to students admitted to the MSW Program)

SW 6000 MSW Practice I (3 hours)
A social work methods course designed to enable the student to understand and apply social work methods within the context of the generalist perspective with individuals and families. Prerequisite: Admission to MSW Program

SW 6010 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (3 hours) (online delivery)
An introduction to the theories and knowledge of the human bio-psycho-social development including theories and knowledge about the range of social systems in which individuals live (families, groups, organizations, agencies, and communities). Prerequisite: Admission to MSW Program
SW 6020 Research I (3 hours)  
This is a basic research and statistical methods course, utilizing research in general inquiry and practice evaluation in social work with the generalist perspective. Prerequisite: Admission to MSW Program

SW 6030 Social Welfare Policy and Services (3 hours) (online delivery)  
The historical development, philosophical orientation, and analysis of U.S. social welfare policy and services, including the global context. Prerequisite: Admission to MSW Program

SW 6100 MSW Practice II (3 hours)  
A social work methods course designed to enable the student to understand and apply social work methods within the context of the generalist perspective with groups, agencies, and communities. Prerequisites: MSW Practice I & HBSE

SW 6110 Social Justice & Equity for Multicultural Populations (3 hours) (online delivery)  
An overview of the professional commitment of social work to oppressed peoples. Prerequisite: HBSE

SW 6120 Research II (3 hours)  
An advanced discussion of program evaluation strategies and single system design issues. The student will conduct a research project. Prerequisite: Research I

SW 6130 Practicum IA (3 hours)  
A 200 hour field practicum experience within the generalist perspective. May be taken concurrently with Practicum IB. Prerequisites: MSW Practice I, HBSE, Research I, & Policy

SW 6140 Practicum IB (3 hours)  
A 200 hour field practicum experience with the generalist perspective. May be taken concurrently with Practicum IA. Prerequisites: MSW Practice I, HBSE, Research I, & Policy.

**Concentration Courses (Students must have taken their Foundation courses or been admitted with Advanced Standing)**

SW 6200 Advanced Practice with Individuals (3 hours)  
Advanced practice with individuals including client system assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Prerequisites: Practicum IA (SW 6130) & IB (SW 6140) OR Advanced Standing admission

SW 6210 Advanced Practice with Families (3 hours)  
Advanced practice with families including client system assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Prerequisites: Practicum IA (SW 6130) & IB (SW 6140) OR Advanced Standing admission

SW 6220 Advanced Group Practice (3 hours)  
Advanced practice with groups including client system assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Prerequisites: Practicum IA (SW 6130) & IB (SW 6140) OR Advanced Standing admission
SW 6230 Advanced Macro Practice (3 hours)
Advanced practice with organizations and communities including system assessment, intervention, and evaluation. Prerequisites: Practicum IA (SW 6130) & IB (SW 6140) OR Advanced Standing admission

SW 6240 Social Policy Analysis (3 hours) (online delivery)
A study of the design, implementation, and analysis of social policies and their impact on social work practice. Prerequisites: Practicum IA (SW 6130) & IB (SW 6140) OR Advanced Standing admission

SW 6300 Empirical Social Work Practice (4 hours)
A seminar in the integration of theoretical perspectives and the application of research findings and empirical outcome evaluation techniques to advanced generalist social work practice. Prerequisites: Advanced Practice with Individuals, Advanced Practice with Families OR Advanced Group Practice, Advanced Macro Practice, & Social Policy Analysis

SW 6310 Practicum IIA (4 hours)
A 250 hour field practicum experience. May be taken concurrently with Practicum IIB. Prerequisites: Advanced Practice with Individuals, Advanced Practice with Families OR Advanced Group Practice, Advanced Macro Practice, & Social Policy Analysis

SW 6320 Practicum IIB (4 hours)
A 250 hour field practicum experience. May be taken concurrently with Practicum IIA. Prerequisites: Advanced Practice with Individuals, Advanced Practice with Families OR Advanced Group Practice, Advanced Macro Practice, & Social Policy Analysis

Elective Courses

SW 5000 Special Topics (3 hours) (online delivery)
Special topics in social work and social welfare. May be repeated for a maximum of 15 hours.

SW 6400 Independent Study (3 hours)
Independent study allows a student to develop more fully an area of his or her particular interest. Topics for intensive study are chosen in joint consultation between the student and the instructor.

SW 6410 Aging Issues and Controversies (3 hours) (online delivery)
This course examines the biological, psychological, and social issues affecting older adults. The field of gerontology is explored with special attention to current controversies in health care, independence, and social status with application of ethical theories to these problems. Special attention is given to the impacts on the family of caregiving, alternative living arrangements, cognitive and physical decline, and other aging issues.

SW 6420 Adult Mental Health (3 hours) (online delivery)
This course prepares students for advanced generalist practice by integrating foundation level knowledge of policy, research, HBSE and practice with substantive knowledge from the field of mental health. Students will learn the basics of DSM-V diagnosis, biopsychosocial assessment,
and treatment planning. They will be exposed to the skills necessary to conduct strengths and competency-based assessments and interventions. Permission of department required.

---

### DEGREE PLAN – PROGRAM OF STUDY

#### FULL TIME PROGRAM

**MSW FOUNDATION, 30 SEMESTER HOURS**

**FIRST YEAR:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6000 MSW Practice I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6100 MSW Practice II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6010 HBSE (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6110 Social Justice online</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6020 Research I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6120 Research II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6030 Policy (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6130 Practicum IA (200 hrs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6140 Practicum IB (200 hrs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 15 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total 15 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MSW CONCENTRATION IN ADVANCED GENERALIST PRACTICE, 30 SEMESTER HOURS**

**SECOND YEAR:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6200 Advanced Practice w Individuals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6300 Empirical SW Practice</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6210 Advanced Practice w Families  OR</td>
<td></td>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6220 Advanced Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6310 Practicum IIA (250 hrs)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6240 Social Policy Analysis (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6320 Practicum IIB (250 hrs)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6230 Advanced Macro Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 15 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total 15 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PART-TIME PROGRAM**

**MSW FOUNDATION, 30 SEMESTER HOURS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6000 MSW Practice I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6100 MSW Practice II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6010 HBSE (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6110 Social Justice (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 6 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total 6 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall - Second Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring - Second Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6020 Research I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6120 Research II</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6030 Policy (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6130 Practicum IA (200 hrs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 6 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total 6 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 3 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summer - Second Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6140 Practicum IB (200 hrs)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 3 hours</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART-TIME PROGRAM (cont.)

MSW CONCENTRATION IN ADVANCED GENERALIST PRACTICE, 30 SEMESTER HOURS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Spring - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
<th>Summer - First Year</th>
<th>Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 6200 Advanced Practice w Individuals</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6240 Social Policy Analysis (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 5000 Special Topics (online)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 6 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 6 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fall - Second Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>Spring - Second Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
<td><strong>Summer - Second Year</strong></td>
<td><strong>Hours</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6210 Advanced Practice w Families</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>SW 6300 Empirical SW Practice</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>SW 6320 Practicum IIB (250 hrs)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OR</td>
<td></td>
<td>SW 6310 Practicum IIA (250 hrs)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6220 Advanced Groups</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 6230 Advanced Macro Practice</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 6 hours</td>
<td>Total 8 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total 4 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Part Time Students are</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Summer Graduates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADVISEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Student advisement is an important component of the MTSU-MSW Program. The purposes of advisement are to:

- Advise the student through the process of obtaining a MSW degree.
- Work with the student around any academic problems that may arise.
- Assist the student in exploring possible directions for his or her professional career.

Once admitted, students are assigned to an academic advisor who is a faculty member. Faculty advisors will have posted office hours during which they are available to meet with students for advisement. They may also be contacted by phone or email.

ADMISSION TO FIELD

Field education is one of the cornerstones of professional social work education. During their field practicum, MSW students have the opportunity to apply what they are learning in the classroom to real world situations. They also can bring their field practicum experiences back to the classroom for reflection, examination, analysis, and synthesis.

Students who enter the MSW Program without advanced standing complete two field experiences: a 6-credit foundation placement and an 8-credit advanced generalist practice placement. Students who enter with advanced standing complete a single, 8-credit advanced generalist practice placement. In addition to agency-based supervision, a faculty member serves as a liaison between the program and the placement to foster the integration of field and classroom learning.

Students should be aware that, consistent with CSWE standards, the MTSU-MSW Program does
not grant academic credits for life, volunteer, or work experience or for graduate-level internship experiences completed in a field or discipline other than social work.

Orientation to the MTSU-MSW Program’s field education component is provided to students each fall semester. For further information on field education policies and procedures, including a listing of the specific criteria to be met before beginning a field placement, see the Field Education Manual.

ADMISSION TO CANDIDACY

Admission to candidacy signifies that a student has demonstrated the ability to do graduate-level studies and is prepared to continue on with the work required for her or his degree. Criteria for Admission to Candidacy include having:

- Been admitted to the MSW program
- Successfully completed a minimum of 12 hours of graduate work
- Maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0
- Secured a faculty recommendation for candidacy
- Filed a degree plan/plan of study with appropriate approvals

COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

As a non-thesis program, the culminating experience for the MSW Program will be a written comprehensive examination. The comprehensive examination will be completed in the student’s final semester of study, and will incorporate both the application of research and the integration of classroom and field-based learning experiences. Information about the comprehensive exam will be provided in the SW 6300 Empirical Social Work Practice course.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for graduation, MSW students must complete all of this program’s course and field education requirements and have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.

It is the responsibility of the MSW student to submit in a timely fashion all necessary paperwork required for graduation by the College of Graduate Studies/School of Graduate Studies and Research. Information on these requirements can be obtained from the university’s Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin:

MTSU  http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/
COUNSELING OUT

"Counseling out" is a term used to describe discontinuing a student's enrollment in the MTSU-MSW Program. In most cases, the decision to discontinue a student in the program is considered permanent. In certain circumstances, a student may be counseled out with specific remedial steps to be taken before formal re-application to the program may be made.

Students can be counseled out for failure to meet academic standards, the conditions of academic probation, or for behavior that violates university, practicum agency, or professional standards.

Students have the right to appeal the counseling out decision through the identified grievance procedures of each of the three collaborating universities.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The MTSU-MSW Program is committed to ensuring that MSW students are treated fairly and with respect and dignity during their graduate education. Students deserve to have their work evaluated in a non-biased and timely fashion. They should receive appropriate recognition for their contributions to work they do with faculty members. No student in the MTSU-MSW Program should be subject to bias or discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, or disability.

A fuller statement of students’ rights and responsibilities can be found at:

MTSU  [http://catalog.mtsu.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2670](http://catalog.mtsu.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=2670)

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The MTSU-MSW Program fully supports students’ rights and responsibilities to formulate and modify policies affecting academic and student affairs. MSW students are encouraged to be full participants in exercising the rights and responsibilities available to them as outlined in the university’s Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin:

MTSU  [http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/](http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/)

The MTSU-MSW program also encourages, and will facilitate, students organizing in their own interests. To further the goal of student participation in the development of Social Work Department policies, student liaisons and student representatives will be selected as follows:

**Faculty Meetings**
A student at each campus will be elected by the social work student organization to function as liaison between social work students and social work faculty. Social work faculty may choose to select additional student(s) to serve as student liaisons. The liaison(s) will be non-voting participants at social work department faculty meetings and will have a scheduled time on the agenda to share concerns and information from student organizations and the student body.
Student liaisons will be excused from the discussion at faculty meetings when the faculty address confidential issues.

**Social Work Advisory Board**
A student from each campus will be elected by the social work student organization to be a student representative on the Social Work Advisory Board. One of the elected students should be in her or his foundation studies, while the other two should be students in the concentration. Student representatives will be a full participant in board activities.

**GRADE APPEAL**

Students have the right to appeal grades or other academic matters. These policies are published in the *Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin* of each of the three collaborating universities:

MTSU  [http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/](http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/)

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

MSW students are expected to intellectually honest and forthright in their academic and field placement activities. All work MSW students complete for all courses should be their own. MSW students are expected to give credit to the sources used in their work by including appropriate citations and identifying direct quotations with quotation marks and providing complete reference information. MTSU has a policy for academic integrity, including the potential penalties for academic misconduct, and the MTSU-MSW Program will be adhere to those policies. Academic misconduct includes the following behaviors: plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. The following definitions apply:

1. **Plagiarism.** The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one's own without proper acknowledgment.
2. **Cheating.** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.
3. **Fabrication.** Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
4. **Facilitation.** Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

Refer to the *Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin* at each university for additional information:

MTSU  [http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/](http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/)

**REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

If you have a disability that may require assistance or accommodations, or if you have any
questions related to any accommodation for testing, note taking, reading, etc., please speak with
the instructor as soon as possible. To register with the University for Accommodations, contact:

MTSU: Disability and Access Center Middle Tennessee State University, KUC 120,
Murfreesboro, TN 37132, 615-898-2783 (Voice)/615-898-2836 (TTY)

REPORTING OF UNOFFICIAL WITHDRAWALS

Federal regulations require that students who cease class attendance but do not officially
withdraw from the University must be reported so that future financial aid will cease and/or the
student will be required to return funds. Therefore, during the term, the instructor is required to
complete a roster indicating those students who have stopped attending class without officially
withdrawing.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

This university is a community of people with respect for diversity that emphasizes the dignity
and equality common to all individual faculty, staff, and students. For information on non-
discrimination contact:

MTSU: Institutional Equity and Compliance Office, Middle Tennessee State University,
Cope Administration Building #116, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, 615-898-2185

The MTSU-MSW Program and the Social Work department makes specific and continuous
efforts to provide a learning context in which respect for all persons and understanding of
diversity (including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender,
marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation) are practiced. Social
work education builds upon professional practice and values; therefore, the MTSU-MSW
Program provides a learning context that is nondiscriminatory and reflects the profession’s
fundamental tenets. The learning context, the educational program (including faculty, staff, and
student composition; selection of agencies and their clientele as field education settings;
composition of program advisory or field committees; resource allocation; program leadership;
speakers series, seminars, and special programs; research and other initiatives), and the
program’s curriculum model understanding of and respect for diversity.

POLICY ON HARASSMENT

MTSU is committed to establishing an atmosphere where your work, education, and
participation in the university’s activities and programs will be free from intimidation or
offensive behaviors. Sexual, racial or other forms of harassment have no place in a university
community. For more information contact:

MTSU: Institutional Equity and Compliance Office, Middle Tennessee State University,
Cope Administration Building #116, Murfreesboro, TN 37132, 615-898-2185

ACCESS TO EDUCATIONAL RECORDS
MTSU has established procedures by which students can access their educational records. Please consult the *Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin* for further details:

MTSU  [http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/](http://www.mtsu.edu/gcat/)

**EXCEPTIONS TO MTSU-MSW PROGRAM POLICIES**

Exceptions to MTSU-MSW Program policies are rare; however, in unusual situations students may seek an exception by submitting a request in writing. Students who do not meet admission requirements, course prerequisites, or other stated conditions may appeal the decision in writing. A request or appeal for an exception, which is made by the student, should include a statement as to why the student believes her or his case is exceptional and merits additional consideration.
STUDENT AND PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

MSW Student Organization
Students are organized to provide representatives to the Faculty meetings and to the Advisory Board meetings. These representatives are encouraged to keep in touch electronically to ensure effective representation of all students.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) http://www.socialworkers.org/
NASW is the national organization for professional social workers with over 150,000 members and 56 chapters throughout the United States and abroad. The organization has programs in professional development, standards, and action. It seeks to achieve sound social policy affecting those who are served. Its activities and membership services are structured to help all social workers to advance their practice in the field of helping people. The organization is committed to a high standard of practice and guides its members to this standard through the Code of Ethics (http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp). NASW meetings are held annually, both on the national and state levels. Local branch meetings are held monthly. Low student membership rates are offered for those pursuing an education in the field of social work. Liability insurance, sometimes required during a student's practicum semesters, may also be obtained from NASW. Members of NASW also receive the professional journal Social Work, which is committed to improving practice and extending knowledge in social work and social welfare. The journal is published bimonthly and is indexed/abstracted in: Criminal Justice Abstract, Social Citation Index, Social Work Research and Abstracts, Social Sciences Index, and various other publications.

National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) http://www.nabsw.org/
NABSW is the national organization established in 1968 specifically to address social issues that affect the social, economic, psychological, and physical well-being of the Black community. There are chapters across the U.S., as well as in the Caribbean and Africa. Through participation in NABSW’s national and international conferences, social workers can stay connected with each other and stay informed on state-of-the-art practice approaches and ideas. NABSW is a rich source of professional and cultural resources to help social workers in reaching their full potential in the profession and in enriching the lives of those with whom they work. Students are encouraged to become members and to form student chapters; NABSW’s Office of Student Affairs is available to facilitate students’ participation.

International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) http://www.ifsw.org/
The International Federation of Social Workers brings together social workers and their professional organizations from around the globe. The organization works to foster social justice, social development, and international cooperation. It strives to identify and disseminate information about best practices. It is committed to enhancing the profession of social work. Each year, the organization holds a thematically-focused annual meeting.

Tennessee Conference on Social Welfare (TCSW) http://www.tcsw.org/
The TCSW grew out of the activities of reform leaders at the beginning of the 20th century. Originally called the Tennessee Conference on Charities and Corrections, the TCSW celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2013. Today the TCSW is a statewide organization composed of six regional networks that focus on a variety of topics. The organization engages in advocacy, and educational activities directed at “improving the social and economic well-being of Tennesseans.” Regular training sessions on issues related to public policy and service effectiveness are offered across the state. In addition to its annual conference, the TCSW also holds regional conferences.

**Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) [http://www.cswe.org/](http://www.cswe.org/)**

CSWE is a national nonprofit organization that was established in 1952. Its membership includes individuals as well as undergraduate and master’s-level social work programs. CSWE is the accrediting body for social work educational programs. The organization also engages in research on the profession, especially those issues that relate to professional social work education. CSWE publishes the *Journal of Social Work Education*; the CSWE Press publishes books relevant to social work education, including textbooks for classroom use. CSWE holds an annual meeting that offers social worker academics a chance to learn about new research and instructional methodologies.


SSWR was established in 1993 to promote the engagement of practicing social workers, social work academics, and social work students in research. SSWR is dedicated to fostering the well-being of people and communities through the conduct of research and the application of research findings. At each year’s annual meeting, excellence in faculty and doctoral student research is acknowledged.

**AWARDS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

A limited number of graduate student scholarships are available. Information on these awards and scholarships can be obtained from the Financial Aid Office:

MTSU [http://www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/](http://www.mtsu.edu/financialaid/)

**Tennessee Department of Children’s Services Tuition Program**

To enhance the knowledge and skills of current employees, the Tennessee Department of Children’s Services (DCS) is offering financial and administrative support to DCS employees who wish to complete their MSW degree. Information about the DCS tuition program can be accessed at [www.tn.gov/youth/training/titleIV-E.shtml](http://www.tn.gov/youth/training/titleIV-E.shtml)

**SOCIAL WORK ADVISORY BOARD**

A board of community social service professionals serves in an advisory capacity to the MTSU-
MSW Program, providing current professional community input to the program. Community members advise MTSU-MSW Program faculty on needs, trends, and issues of particular relevance to the local area. Community members are brought together to provide guidance on the development and delivery of the program overall.

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

Any student who is dissatisfied with his or her treatment in any academic situation (except grades) that may occur in the MTSU-MSW Program may have his or her grievance addressed by utilizing the following grievance procedure:

1. The student discusses the issue with the faculty member(s) with whom there is a difference.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the student should contact the Chair of the Department of Social Work.
3. If there is still no resolution, the student should prepare a written statement addressed to the MSW Review Committee. The statement should provide the committee with all relevant information about the issue or problem, and the steps the student has taken to obtain a resolution of the problem.
4. Upon receipt of the student's statement, the Committee will meet to consider the issue or problem. The Committee will accept written statements from any involved faculty member. The Committee will prepare a written report with recommendation(s) for resolution. Membership of the committee will include all social work faculty as well as the MSW Program Coordinator; excluded from the Committee will be the Department Chair and the faculty member with whom the student has a dispute.
5. The Committee will send the report to the Department Chair for appropriate action.
6. The student, if not satisfied, may confer with the Chair of the Department of Social Work and with the Dean of the Graduate College.
APPENDIX: MTSU-MSW PROGRAM POLICIES

The following policies, with the exception of those for field education, were adopted September 2009. Field education policies were adopted February 2010.
Policy #1.1 -- Credit for Life, Volunteer, or Employment Experience

Academic or field education credit shall not be granted by the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program for life, volunteer, or employment experience.

Policy #1.2 -- Advanced Standing

Advanced Standing is defined as the awarding of academic credit toward a MSW degree for prior baccalaureate course and field work completed at an undergraduate social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).*

Persons who enter the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program with a degree granted by a CSWE-accredited undergraduate social work program* and who have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 are eligible for advanced standing. Individuals granted advanced standing upon admission to this program will be given credit for foundation course and field work and will have the requirements for the MSW degree reduced by 30 credits; advanced standing students will complete this program’s concentration curriculum only.

* For the purposes of granting Advanced Standing credit under this paragraph, an accredited undergraduate social work program is one that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education as posted in the Council’s Directory of Colleges and Universities with Accredited Social Work Degree Programs. International students who hold a baccalaureate degree in social work from a program that is not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and who are interested in obtaining advanced standing credit must submit their transcript to the Council for a determination of equivalency.

Policy #1.3 -- Transfer Credit or Course Exemption in the MSW Program

Transfer Credit is defined as the awarding of academic credit toward a degree for post-baccalaureate course or field work completed at an accredited academic institution when such work meets the transfer credit requirements of the university as well as those of this MSW Program.

Exemption is defined as the waiving of a required academic course following: 1) an evaluation of the student’s previous post-baccalaureate work that determines it to be essentially identical to the required course being waived and that meets the requirements of the university as well as those of this MSW Program; or 2) demonstration by the student via examination of his or her mastery of a specific foundation content area for which such an examination is available. An exemption as defined herein does not reduce the number of credits required for graduation.

A. Persons who have completed master’s level work at a CSWE-accredited master of social work program* and who are admitted to the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program for completion of the MSW degree may be eligible to receive transfer
credits and/or course exemptions.

Any exemption granted will not reduce the number of credits the student needs in order to complete his or her MSW degree. The number of credits granted or reduced for a given course can neither exceed the number on the transcript from the school where they were earned nor the number earned in the corresponding course in this program. Regardless of the exemptions or transfer credits granted under this paragraph, the student will be required to complete before graduation all foundation and concentration requirements of this program’s curriculum.

The specific transfer credits or exemptions granted will depend on the curriculum of the master of social work program the student attended, the courses the student completed, this program’s MSW curriculum, and the requirements of the university. This evaluation will be performed by the MSW Program Coordinator, or his or her designate, in collaboration with relevant graduate faculty from this program and representatives of the graduate division.

* For the purposes of granting Transfer Credit or Exemption under this paragraph, an accredited master of social work program is one that is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of the Council on Social Work Education as posted in the Council's Directory of Colleges and Universities with Accredited Social Work Degree Programs.

B. Persons who have completed post-baccalaureate academic work at an accredited academic institution in some discipline or profession other than social work and who are admitted to the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program may be entitled to transfer up to nine (9) credits of elective coursework. Coursework considered for transfer credits must meet the requirements for transfer credit of the university.

The number of credits granted for a given course can neither exceed the number on the transcript from the school where they were earned nor the number earned in the corresponding course at MTSU.

Exemption or transfer credit will not be granted for internship experiences completed during post-baccalaureate work in a discipline or profession other than social work.

C. Persons whose undergraduate education has afforded them strong preparation in one or more of the subjects covered in this program’s foundation curriculum may be able to be exempt from the course(s). Exemption from MSW foundation courses will be determined via available examination only. Any exemption granted, however, will not reduce the number of credits that students will need to complete their MSW degree.

Exemption credit will not be granted for internship experiences completed during baccalaureate work in a discipline or profession other than social work.

Policy #1.4 -- Enrollment Status
A. Full-time students, who will complete the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program in two (2) years, will need to enroll in 12-15 credits per semester.
B. Part-time students, who will complete the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program in four (4) years, will need to enroll in 6-8 credits per semester.

C. A student wishing to change his or her enrollment status from full-time to part-time or from part-time to full-time should first discuss the matter with his or her academic advisor. The student must then submit to the MSW Program Coordinator a written request that indicates the rationale for the change of enrollment status. The written request must be submitted in advance of the student changing the number of credits for which he or she registers. The MSW Program Coordinator will review the request and will notify the student and the academic advisor of the decision.

A change of enrollment status does not increase the amount of time the student has to complete the MSW degree beyond four years from the date of the student’s entry into the program (see Policy #1.5).

Policy #1.5 -- Statute of Limitation on Earning the MSW Degree

There is a four-year statute of limitation on the earning of the MSW degree, consistent with the Council on Social Work Education’s Accreditation Standards. The four-year period is counted from the date of entry into the program for four full academic calendar years.

Under extenuating circumstances (listed below), an academic advisor can recommend an extension of time to the MSW Program Coordinator. If approved, the period of extension and the conditions for completing the program will be recorded in the student's folder, with a copy sent to the student. Extenuating circumstances include the following:

- extended illness of the student
- extended personal emergency
- mobilization into a US military unit
- death of a close family member

Policy #1.6 -- Leave of Absence/Stop Out

Under special circumstances, a MSW student may be granted a leave of absence from the program. A student wishing to take a leave of absence should refer to his or her university’s Graduate Catalog for information on specific requirements and procedures. The time out of the program during an approved leave of absence/stop out will not count against the total time allowed to complete the MSW degree.

Policy #1.7 -- Readmission to the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program

In addition to seeking readmission in the graduate division, a person seeking to re-enter this program must submit a letter to the MSW Program Coordinator. The letter should discuss why
the individual wishes to return to the MSW Program and the plans he or she has to ensure that he or she will now be able to participate fully and meet the program’s course and field education requirements. The letter will be reviewed by the MSW Program Coordinator and the graduate faculty. Their recommendation will be forwarded to the graduate division.

**Policy #1.8 – Advisement**

Each MSW student will be assigned to a graduate faculty member who will serve as his or her advisor. The purposes of advisement are to:

- Provide guidance on academic matters
- Assist with problem solving
- Offer consultation on professional development and social work career opportunities

Students are expected to meet with their faculty advisors on a regular basis, at minimum once a semester.

**Policy #1.9 -- MSW Graduation Requirements**

To qualify for graduation, MSW students must complete all of this program’s course and field education requirements and have a cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.

**Policy #2.1: Requirements for Admission to MSW Field**

To be accepted for foundation field education (SW 6130/6140), MSW students must complete Practice I (SW 6000), HBSE (SW 6010), Research I (SW 6020), and Social Welfare Policy and Services (SW 6030) and achieve an overall GPA of 3.0 or higher in their MSW courses. In addition, students are required to attend a general field introductory session as well as other field education meetings. Pre-placement application materials must be submitted to the Department of Social Work prior to scheduling an individual appointment with the Field Coordinator. Student will be responsible for contacting the potential practicum agency and meeting with the field instructor to finalize the placement. Written confirmation of the placement must be received by the Social Work office prior to the end of the fall semester.

To be accepted for the advanced generalist concentration field experience (SW 6310/6320), MSW students must complete Advanced Practice with Individuals (SW 6200), Advanced Practice with Families (SW 6210) OR Advanced Group Practice (SW 6220), Advanced Macro Practice (SW 6230), and Social Policy Analysis (SW 6240) and have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students must enroll concurrently in Empirical Social Work Practice (SW 6300) during the spring semester in which they do their concentration field placement. Students are responsible for ensuring that request for placement forms, interviews with the Field Coordinator and with the potential field instructor, and written confirmation of the placement are completed by the deadlines set by the Department of Social Work.
Policy #2.2: Conflicts of Interest

Field students should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with professional discretion and impartial judgment. During the field placement planning process, MSW students should let the Field Coordinator know about any agencies with which there may be a conflict of interest because:

1. Students and/or their family members are currently receiving or have recently finished receiving agency services.
2. A family member is currently employed by the agency or has recently left a position with the agency.

Once in the field education placement, MSW students should follow the required steps to avoid conflicts of interest:

1. Inform the field instructor when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the client's interests primary and protects client's interests to the greatest extent.
2. Refrain from taking unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploiting others to further personal, political, religious, or business interests.
3. Refrain from engaging in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of potential harm or exploitation to the client. Dual or multiple relationships occur when MSW students relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business.
4. When providing services to two or more individuals who have a relationship with each other (i.e., couples, family members), MSW students should clarify with all parties which individuals are considered clients and professional obligations to all individuals who are receiving services.

Policy #2.3: Confidentiality

MSW students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior that is consistent with the ethical standards identified in the NASW Code of Ethics. As part of this, students are expected to maintain the confidentiality of information during their practicum experiences. They should avoid discussing the particulars of cases with friends, family members, and others not directly involved in the cases. Students should never disclose client names to others or use actual client names in their process recordings, journals, course notebooks, papers, etc.

Policy #2.4: Professional Liability Insurance

While the risk is relatively small, the student and the agency should recognize the possibility of lawsuit in a case where a student is involved, even though the suit may not involve the student directly. The MTSU- MSW Program requires malpractice insurance for all MSW students in
practicum. The MTSU-MSW Program is not able to cover the costs for such liability insurance for MSW students.

In some cases, agencies may be able to include students (who are their employees) under their "blanket policy." Alternatively, students can check with their insurance providers to see if they have a rider to cover such liability insurance. NASW provides such insurance for a nominal fee to its members. Information on NASW membership and insurance is available at: https://www.socialworkers.org/join.asp

Within two weeks of beginning their practicum, students must submit documentation of liability insurance to the MSW Field Coordinator.

**Policy #2.5: Practicum Hours and Attendance**

The foundation practicum (SW 6130/6140) involves a total of 400 hours, or 6 credits. MSW students can enter their foundation practicum only in the spring semester. Students have the option of registering for all 6 credits and completing all 400 hours in a single spring semester OR registering for 3 credits and completing 200 hours in the spring semester and finishing the remaining 3 credits/200 hours in the summer semester. Students who register for all 6 credits of foundation field education in the spring semester must complete approximately 27 hours of practicum per week over the course of the semester, excluding the period for spring break. Those who register for 3 credits of foundation field education in the spring and 3 credits in the summer must complete approximately 15 hours of practicum per week, excluding the spring break period and the time between semesters.

The advanced generalist concentration practicum (SW 6310/6320) involves a total of 500 hours, or 8 credits. MSW students can enter their concentration practicum only in the spring semester. Students have the option of registering for all 8 credits and completing all 500 hours in a single spring semester OR registering for 4 credits and completing 250 hours in the spring semester and finishing the remaining 4 credits/250 hours in the summer semester. Students who register for all 8 credits of concentration field education in the spring semester must complete approximately 33 hours of practicum per week over the course of the semester, excluding the period for spring break. Those who register for 4 credits of concentration field education in the spring and 4 credits in the summer must complete approximately 19 hours of practicum per week, excluding the spring break period and the time between semesters.

All students must observe agency work hours and notify the field instructor of any unavoidable absences or lateness in advance if possible. Students must make up time for being late and/or absent. Students are entitled to hazardous weather closings and to holidays that are observed by the field agency. Students are not expected to report to their field agency on holidays observed by the university, should these differ from the holidays observed by the field agency. However, students must discuss this with their field instructors prior to the absence; the field instructors may request that the students come to the agency that day.
If approved by their field instructors, students may continue in their practicum during spring break as well as during the period between spring and summer semesters. They may complete no more than their usual number of hours per week during these periods. A schedule must be submitted to the faculty liaison at least two weeks prior to the break.

Students are responsible for completing the required number of field hours and for maintaining a timesheet to document the completion of their field hours. Although students sometimes will want to complete more than the required number of hours per week in order to reduce the number of weeks in which they are at their practicum setting, they should be aware that they have made a commitment to the agency and are expected to extend their practicum throughout the semester in which they are enrolled. Therefore, students should not expect to complete their practicum prior to the final week of classes.

**Policy #2.6: Employment-Based Practicum**

Students who are working in a social service agency or whose employment with a social service agency will begin at least 30 days prior to the start of their field placement can request a field practicum at their place of employment. The employing agency must be agreeable to serving as the employee’s field practicum site and willing to create learning experiences, provide field instruction, and comply with other field education requirements. The practicum assignment must be clearly educational, should afford the student learning experiences that contribute to his or her development as an advanced generalist social worker, and do not replicate current or past work assignments. The use of settings where the student is already an employee as a field practicum site may be permitted if the following conditions are met:

1. The field practicum must be an entirely different experience than the one where the student is working or is employed.
2. Assignments developed for the practicum must be educationally focused and must be clearly delineated from work assignments.
3. The student's work supervisor should not serve as the field instructor.
4. The person supervising the student cannot be enrolled in the Middle Tennessee State University Master of Social Work Program.
5. The agency must meet the same criteria as other field practicum agencies, as specified in the *MSW Field Education Manual*.
6. The person designated as the field instructor must meet the same criteria as other field instructors, as specified in the *MSW Field Education Manual*.
7. The student must fill out the Field Education Application for an employment-based placement request.
8. The Field Coordinator may make an agency visit.

**Policy #2.7: Compliance with Field Agency Policies and Procedures**

MSW students are expected to follow agency policies and procedures and abide by the rules and
regulations of the agency while in their field placements. They are responsible for fulfilling the
practicum agencies’ requirements for background checks, health screenings, finger printing, and
the like. Students represent their practicum agencies in their contacts with clients, other agencies
and organizations, and the general public. They therefore are expected to present themselves in
a professional manner and to demonstrate behavior that is consistent both with agency
requirements and with the NASW Code of Ethics.

Policy #2.8: Compliance with University Policies and Procedures

During their field education experiences MSW students are expected to follow the policies and
procedures of the MTSU-MSW Program. These include, but are not limited to, university
policies concerning non-discrimination, academic integrity, and harassment. Students are not
only representing their practicum agencies, but also their university and the MTSU-MSW
Program in their contacts with clients, other agencies and organizations, and the general public.
They therefore are expected to present themselves in a professional manner and to demonstrate
behavior that is consistent with university policies and codes of conduct.

Policy #2.9: Transportation

All costs incurred travelling to and from the field placement agency, including but not limited to
gas, parking, and tolls, are the responsibility of the student.

In some cases, students may be required to use their own vehicles to perform activities associated
with the field placement, such as making home visits or attending case conferences at other
agencies. Students who use their own vehicles for agency business should talk with their field
instructors about agency policy and procedures for reimbursement of expenses incurred. It is the
students’ responsibility to submit documentation required for reimbursement to the agency.
Students also should discuss potential liability issues with their field instructors as well as with
their insurance agents and make sure that they have adequate automobile insurance coverage.

Students at times may be asked to transport clients in their own cars as part of their placement
duties. If at all possible, the agency should provide students with an agency vehicle for the
purpose of conducting agency business (i.e. transporting clients). However, an agency may not
always be able to do this. In these cases it is the students’ responsibility to discuss with their
field instructors and their insurance agents the type of automobile insurance required if they are
to transport clients in their own vehicles and to ensure that they have adequate automobile
insurance coverage. These liability issues should be resolved before a student transports any
clients.

Policy #2.10: Change of Placement

Occasionally, difficulties arise in a field placement resulting in a need to change the agency
placement. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain appropriate contact with the field
liaison and/or Field Coordinator in an attempt to prevent issues that come up in the practicum from escalating to the point where a change of placement may be required.

Students who feel they are having problems should first try to resolve the issues directly with their field instructor. If these efforts do not resolve the problem, then students should contact their field liaison. In most cases, difficulties can be resolved through the combined efforts of the student, the faculty liaison, and the field instructor.

If the difficulty is sufficiently severe and cannot be resolved in this manner, the field liaison will apprise the Field Coordinator of the situation and the Field Coordinator will consider a change of placement. If the student and the Field Coordinator cannot agree on an appropriate course of action, the student can ask the MSW Program Coordinator to become involved in the matter. If after involving the MSW Program Coordinator the student still does not accept the recommended course of action, he or she can initiate an academic grievance, following the policies and procedures prescribed by the university.

Additionally, per the educational agreement between the university and the agency, the agreement to have students placed at the agency is strictly voluntary and can be cancelled at any point.

**Policy #2.11: Removal of a Student from Field Practicum**

Field education is considered an essential component of a MSW student’s academic preparation for professional social work practice. Therefore, what happens at a student’s practicum is considered to be an academic matter and, as such, comes within the purview of not only the field education policies, but also those of the MTSU-MSW Program, the Graduate College, and the University.

A student can be removed from his or her field placement due to unsatisfactory performance at the practicum. Reasons for termination from the field include:

1. Serious or repeated violation of social work ethics as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Breaking a law in an agency-related matter or conviction of a felony during the practicum year. (If it is discovered while the student is in the field that the student has failed to disclose a prior serious criminal conviction, this may also be considered grounds for action.)
3. Evidence of chemical dependence or illegal use of drugs while enrolled in the program.
4. A serious breach of the practicum agency’s policy.
5. A hostile or resistant attitude toward learning or supervision.
6. An inability to carry out assignments in the practicum.
7. Behavior that is emotionally or physically dangerous to agency clients or to agency staff.
A student who is terminated from his or her field placement will receive a grade of “Fail” for the field education credits in which he or she is registered and will be asked to leave the MSW Program.

Policy #2.12: Field Education Grading

A formal evaluation is conducted at the end of a student’s field placement. The educational objectives and tasks established in the Field Education Learning Contract and Evaluation form provide the criteria against which the student’s progress can be assessed. The field instructor and student should independently evaluate the student’s performance and then should discuss their assessments with each other, identifying areas of commonality as well as difference. In this way the evaluation itself can be part of the student’s learning.

The field practicum is graded on "Pass" or "Fail" basis. The field instructor recommends a grade to the field liaison. However, it is the field liaison, as a faculty member, who ultimately is responsible for assigning the grade and submitting it to the university.

The option of repeating a course in which a failing grade is received does not extend to field education (SW 6130/6140 and SW 6310/6320). Therefore, if a student receives a grade of "Fail" for the field practicum, he or she will be asked to leave the MSW program. The student has the right to appeal the grade of “Fail”; the procedures a student must use to appeal a grade are described in the Graduate Catalog/Graduate Bulletin.

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be given if the student has not completed the required number of field hours or assignments. The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a temporary grade indicating that the student has performed satisfactorily in the field placement but was unable to complete all practicum hours or assignments due to unforeseen circumstances. The field liaison, the field instructor, and the student jointly decide on the terms for the removal of the incomplete. If the grade of “I” (Incomplete) is not removed within the following semester, the grade will be changed from an "I" to an "F" (Fail) grade and, as described above, the student will be asked to leave the MTSU-MSW program.

Policy #3.1 -- Counseling Out

"Counseling out" is a term used to describe discontinuing a student's enrollment in the MTSU-MSW Program. In most cases, the decision to discontinue a student from the program is considered permanent. In certain circumstances, a student may be counseled out with specific remedial steps to be taken before formal re-application to the program may be made.

A student may be counseled out of the program on recommendation by a faculty member, field instructor, or a participating practicum agency. The recommendation is made to the Social Work Department Chair. The Social Work Department Chair will consult with the MSW Program Coordinator and with all other graduate social work faculty familiar with the student's performance prior to this action being taken. A formal vote is required to initiate such a process,
and will include the MSW Program Coordinator and the graduate faculty.

A MSW student may be counseled out of the program on the basis of:

1. Academic Performance: Student must meet grade requirements. Student must pursue academic honesty and demonstrate academic integrity.
2. Absenteeism: Student must meet the requirements of class and practicum attendance.
3. Professional Behavior: Student must act in a professional manner with peers, faculty, agency personnel, and clients; always treating others with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith. Student should behave in a fashion consistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW).
4. Assaultive or Threatening Behavior: Student will not participate in inappropriate behavior that is directed at clients, colleagues, or instructors.
5. Damaging Behavior: Student must treat others with respect, demonstrate a respect for diversity, protect confidentiality, ensure freedom of expression, and demonstrate a commitment to community.
6. Ineffectiveness in Work with Clients: Student must demonstrate minimal levels of effective performance and apply progressive learning techniques to evidence progress in working with clients. Student must not violate practicum agency policy.

Progressive Discipline. If a student violates any of the above tenets, the student will be counseled and receive one warning. Continuation of the behavior will result in being counseled out of the program. However, dangerous violations can result in immediate expulsion.

Students have the right to appeal the counseling out decision through the identified grievance procedures of the Social Work Program and the University.
PROCEDURES FOR TERMINATION OF ENROLLMENT IN THE MSW PROGRAM

Enrollment in the MTSU MSW program may be terminated for the following reasons:

1. Failure of student to maintain a satisfactory GPA.
2. Failure to meet the Academic and Professional Standards in the social work program.
3. Violations of the University Code of Student Conduct. (See University Catalog)

According to the following process, a student may be dismissed from the MSW program on recommendation by a faculty member, field instructor, or a participating practicum agency. The recommendation is made to the Social Work Department Chair and/or the Academic and Professional Standards Committee. Faculty familiar with the student's performance must be consulted prior to this action being taken. A formal vote from the Academic and Professional Standards Committee is required to initiate dismissal.

A student may be terminated from the program on the basis of the following Academic and Professional Standards:

1. Academic Performance: Students must pursue academic honesty and meet grade requirements. Students are required to maintain a grade of C- or better in all social work courses. Students who earn a final grade of “D” or “F” in any social work course may not re-enroll in these courses or subsequent courses in the program without written permission to the Department Chair or a designee (e.g., MSW Coordinator). Faculty will report midterm and final grades to the Executive Aid using the MSW Grade Reporting Form.

2. Absenteeism: Students must meet the requirements of class and practicum attendance. Students must meet the requirements of professionalism or professional behavior as stated in course syllabi.

3. Professional Behavior: Students must act in a professional manner when engaging in the classroom, University, agency, and wider community. Students must treat peers, faculty, agency personnel, clients, and others with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith. Students must abide by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and MTSU Student Code of Conduct. Students must demonstrate professionalism in appearance, oral, written, and electronic communication. Student are expected to use technology appropriately and professionally. See Appendix E, for more information about Social Media and Professional Behavior.

4. Assultive or Threatening Behavior: Students will not participate in violent, assultive, or threatening behavior that is directed at peers, clients, colleagues, staff, instructors, or others.
5. **Damaging Behavior**: Students must treat others with respect, demonstrate a respect for diversity and difference, protect confidentiality, ensure freedom of expression, and demonstrate a commitment to community.

6. **Ineffectiveness in Work with Clients**: Students must demonstrate professional behavior and effective performance and apply progressive learning techniques to evidence progress in working with clients. Student must not violate practicum agency policy.

Understanding of the requirements and comportment expected of a student in the social work major are detailed in the MSW Admission application and must be signed by the student when the application is submitted.

**Progressive Discipline.** If a student violates any of the above tenets, the student will be terminated from the program and/or may receive an Improvement Plan, which initiates termination. See Appendix F, for an example of the Improvement Plan. Continuation of the identified behavior will result in termination from the program. However, dangerous and/or serious behaviors or violations can result in immediate expulsion. The Academic and Professional Standards Committee is charged with assigning, reviewing, and terminating improvement plans for students.

The improvement plan offers support to students who meet criteria for termination but show potential for improvement in the program given more support. Examples of criteria that warrant improvement plan include failing grades and unprofessional behavior including mental or emotional distress or lack of self-care or stressful life events that led to failing grades or unprofessional behavior. The protocol for improvement plan includes the following:

1. Faculty member, field liaison, field instructor, or a participating practicum agency refers student for academic and/or unprofessional behavior to the Academic and Professional Standards Committee or Department Chair.

2. Academic and Professional Standards Committee reviews student’s case and makes a decision whether to initiate an improvement plan.
   - Committee reviews documentation and/or meets with student, student’s faculty advisor, and faculty familiar with the student’s performance.
   - After reviewing all documentation, the Committee decides to initiate an improvement plan. The improvement plan is completed by student and social work faculty advisor.
   - A student has ten (10) business days to sign the improvement plan. Students who do not sign the improvement plan will be terminated from the program. Students may have one semester to fulfill the expectations of the improvement plan unless the behavioral issues continue.
   - Social work faculty advisor submits the outcome of the improvement plan to the Academic and Professional Standards Committee. The Committee makes
a recommendation to the Chair for the student’s termination or continuation in the program.

3. The Chair or a designee informs the student of their termination or continuation in the MSW program.
   - Students who wish to challenge the improvement plan or termination must write an appeal letter to the Department Chair. The appeal letter must provide the student’s reasons for refusing the improvement plan or challenging termination.
   - Students who wish to challenge the improvement plan or termination have ten (10) business days to write an appeal letter to the Department Chair. The appeal letter must provide the student’s reasons for challenging termination.
   - The expectations of the academic and professional standards of the program remain in place for the duration of enrollment.

When students do not show evidence for improvement in the program, termination from the program is recommended. Examples of criteria that warrant immediate termination include refusal to participate in an improvement plan, unsuccessful completion of an improvement plan, failing grades, and unprofessional behavior including dangerous and/or serious behaviors or violations. The protocol for termination includes the following:

1. Faculty member, field liaison, field instructor, or a participating practicum agency refers student for academic and/or unprofessional behavior to the Academic and Professional Standards Committee or Department Chair.
2. The Academic and Professional Standards Committee reviews student’s case and makes a decision about terminating a student from the social work program.
   - The Committee reviews documentation and/or meets with student and faculty familiar with the student’s performance.
   - If the Committee decides to terminate a student from the social work program, the Committee will make the recommendation to the Chair for the student’s termination.
3. The Chair or a designee informs the student of their termination in the MSW program.
   - Students who wish to challenge termination have ten (10) business days to write an appeal letter to the Department Chair. The appeal letter must provide the student’s reasons for challenging termination. The Chair reviews the student’s appeal letter with the Academic and Professional Standards Committee.

In certain circumstances, a student may be terminated from the MSW program with specific remedial steps to be taken before formal re-application to the program may be made. Students have the right of appeal for the termination process through the identified grievance procedures of the Social Work Program and the University.
MSW ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS IMPROVEMENT PLAN

MSW students are expected and agree to meet the academic and professional standards of the MTSU Department of Social Work. These standards include:

1. Maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher.
2. Meet the academic and professional standards and expectations in the social work program.
3. Meet the University Code of Student Conduct. (See University Catalog)

Students who do not meet the academic and professional standards may be terminated from the program or receive an improvement plan. Students who receive improvement plans will meet with their social work faculty advisor to discuss the identified behavior and a plan for resolution. If the behavior is not resolved in one semester, the student may be terminated from the program. The academic and professional standards are in place for the duration of the MSW program; however, students have one semester to address identified issues in the improvement plan. Students have ten (10) days to sign improvement plan. See the Termination protocol in MTSU MSW Student Handbook, for more information on termination.

Today’s Date: ___________________________  Semester/Year: ____________
Student Name (Print): _____________________________________________
M#: ______________________________________

Summary of Identified Behavior or Lack of Progress/Participation

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
Plan (includes student and faculty responsibilities):

___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

Student Signature: __________________________ Date _____________
Social Work Faculty Advisor (Print): __________________________ Date _____________
Social Work Faculty Advisor: __________________________ Date _____________
Student satisfactorily met expectations of the Improvement Plan and will continue to uphold the IP for the duration of the MSW program.

❑ Student unsatisfactorily met expectations of Improvement Plan and should be terminated from the MSW program. Social Work Faculty advisor will recommend other majors.

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date ______________

Social Work Faculty Signature: ___________________________ Date ______________

*Copies are sent to the following: Student, Student File, Academic and Professional Standards Committee Chair, Department Chair, MSW Coordinator