



# MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

Updated Spring 2024

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## **I. Welcome**

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Welcome to the Master of Social Work Program at Northern Kentucky University! The policies and procedures provided in this handbook pertain to the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. This handbook should be used in conjunction with the NKU Graduate Catalog available on the NKU website at [catalog.nku.edu](http://catalog.nku.edu).

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## **II. Mission Statement**

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### **Mission Statement of the Master of Social Work Program (MSW)**

Northern Kentucky University's Master of Social Work program has a mission statement that is appropriate for advanced social work practice and consistent with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) *EPAS Policy 1.0.1* education and accreditation policies. The mission statement of the MSW program is as follows:

The Social Work program educates competent and ethical Master of Social Work graduates who demonstrate leadership and social work values in their communities and their profession, toward advancing social and economic justice.

### **Mission Statement of the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS)**

CHHS is a globally inclusive leader for student-centered learning that improves the quality of life of the populations we serve. The vision of CHHS is to provide innovative, evidence-based education and scholarship that empowers students to advocate for the well-being of regional, national, and global communities. Our core values include excellence, integrity, belonging, innovation, and collegiality.

### **Mission Statement of Northern Kentucky University (NKU)**

Northern Kentucky University delivers innovative, student-centered education and engages in impactful scholarly and creative endeavors, all of which empower our graduates to have fulfilling careers and meaningful lives, while contributing to the economic, civic, and social vitality of the region.

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## **III. Masters in Social Work (MSW) Program Information (Admission/Advising/Progression)**

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The [NKU Graduate Catalog](#) outlines admission, retention, and graduation information at NKU. In addition, the MSW Program adheres to the following information:

## 1. Admissions/Advising

- 1.1. Orientation to the Program.** The Social Work program provides an orientation to newly admitted MSW students. We strongly recommend students attend these “live” online orientations. For those who cannot attend there will be a recorded version of the orientation available in the MSW Canvas shell.
- 1.2. Criminal Background Information.** Please note, that a criminal background may cause barriers to social work field placement, licensure, and/or employment. Be aware that social work state licensure may be prohibited due to a criminal record. Do actively check the policy of the state in which you desire to obtain social work licensure for that state’s laws and regulations governing licensure in the particular state. Be aware that MSW graduates who are seeking employment are typically screened for criminal history by the potential employer. Employers typically screen for criminal history before hiring an MSW job applicant. Additionally, a mandatory review of an applicant's prior child abuse and neglect record may occur. Such prior records may prevent employment with an employer.
- 1.3. Advising.** College advising staff are available to provide academic advice to students.
- 1.3.1. Please contact our Graduate Coordinator, Heidi Waters at [watersh2@nku.edu](mailto:watersh2@nku.edu) or [maw@nku.edu](mailto:maw@nku.edu) for assistance if in the Advanced Standing MSW.
  - 1.3.2. Please contact our Advisor in the College of Health and Human Services, Emma Bernardi [bernardie1@nku.edu](mailto:bernardie1@nku.edu) for assistance if in the Standard MSW.
  - 1.3.3. Each student engaged in field education (SWK 650, 651, 652) also is advised by the MSW Field Director, Kelly Fallon, [fallonk2@nku.edu](mailto:fallonk2@nku.edu)
- 1.4. Transfer Credit.** The program’s policy and procedures for the transfer of credits are consistent with the university rules regarding transfer work published in the NKU Graduate Catalog. Additional notes regarding the transfer of graduate course credit:
- 1.4.1. The program does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.
  - 1.4.2. Transfer of graduate/professional credits must be completed during the first term of enrollment at Northern Kentucky University.
  - 1.4.3. Courses accepted for transfer must have been taken at a regionally accredited college or university for graduate credit and have received a grade of B or higher. Credit earned through correspondence courses, MOOCs, or work experience will not be transferred.
  - 1.4.4. Credit earned at another university must be submitted to the MSW Graduate Coordinator and MSW Program Director for approval and must include a course description and other supporting documentation, such as syllabi and other course materials.
  - 1.4.5. The decision regarding transfer credits and the applicability to specific components of the student's course of study will be made by the MSW Program Director.

## 2. Progression to Degree

- 2.1. Orientation and Advising.** Upon completion of admission and orientation, students are expected to complete the following:
- 2.1.1. Initiate contact with their advisors as needs arise, and discuss any issues and circumstances in which they need information, support, or clarification.

- 2.1.2. Identify areas of concern regarding any aspect related to their educational experience and communicate the concern to the appropriate person in the program.
- 2.1.3. Use their advisors as resources who can make appropriate referrals to other services as needed.
- 2.1.4. Register for classes as outlined on their approved course of study or notify their college and program faculty advisor of deviations in their course of study. Students should follow their academic plan located in myNKU.
- 2.1.5. Complete field applications and meet with the Field Director to arrange their field placements.

**2.2. Graduation Requirements.** In addition to the requirements set forth by the NKU Graduate Catalog, and completion of all MSW courses and fieldwork, requirements for graduation from the MSW program include:

- 2.2.1. No student will be allowed to have a grade below a B- in Practice I: Generalist Practice, Practice II: Communities and Organizations, Practice III: Intro to Assessment, Practice IV: Clinical Behavioral Health, Practice V: Groups, Human Behavior & the Social Environment, Ethics, Behavioral Health Disorders/Diagnosis I, Behavioral Health Disorders/Diagnosis II, Trauma Focused Care I, Applied Research I, Applied Research II, Field Experience I, Field Experience II, and Field Experience III. Earning a grade below B- in any of these courses will necessitate repeating and successfully earning a grade of B- or higher. It will delay graduation term and may prevent enrollment in additional required courses (for example, field courses must be taken in sequence (see 2.2.2. below for more information) if the student has failed to earn a B- or higher in a pre-requisite course.
- 2.2.2. MSW students enrolled in the Advanced Standing program must complete 600 hours of Field Experience and MSW students enrolled in the Standard Program (both face-to-face/hybrid and online accelerated) must complete 900 hours of Field Experience. Each course is required to be taken in sequence.
- 2.2.3. MSW students must complete a capstone course, Applied Research II. Before enrolling in the culminating experience, students must have completed at least two-thirds of all coursework required for the degree program. Unless otherwise approved by the program director, all core courses also must be completed, with the possible exception of one core course that may be taken concurrently with the culminating experience.
- 2.2.4. Applied Research courses (SWK 641 and SWK 642) must be completed in sequential terms/semesters, with no term/semester breaks between SWK 641 and SWK 642. Terms/semesters include spring and fall, and may include summer depending on the determination of the MSW program director in consultation with the appropriate applied research faculty member.
- 2.2.5. If a student successfully completes SWK 641 but fails SWK 642, then said student will need to retake both SWK 641 and SWK 642. The

- student's academic plan will be modified accordingly.
- 2.2.6. If a student is scheduled, per their academic plan, to take Applied Research I (SWK 641) during the same term/semester as Field Experience II (SWK 651), then delaying SWK 651 will necessarily result in delaying SWK 641. Applied Research II (SWK 642) must be completed during the same term/semester as Field Experience III (SWK 652).
- 2.2.7. Students must adhere to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics and the Professional Performance Expectations outlined below.

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## IV. MSW Curriculum

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### Social Work Program's Mission, Goals, and Outcomes

#### Program Mission Statement

*The Social Work program educates competent and ethical Master of Social Work graduates who demonstrate leadership and social work values in their communities and their profession, toward advancing social and economic justice.*

The mission statement reflects the profession's purpose of promoting human and community well-being by preparing competent professionals who are leaders in the profession and community. Social work values are reflected in the mission statement particularly emphasizing competence, ethics, and social and economic justice.

The program's mission is the foundation for the goals and outcomes of the curriculum. By operationalizing this mission, the program will implement a comprehensive curriculum that is grounded in the profession's history, purpose, and values. The curriculum is based on a body of social work knowledge and skills. The student outcomes are derived from the program's mission and enable graduates to integrate this knowledge toward competent practice.

There are five **program goals** derived from the mission statement's key ideas as follows.

1. The curriculum provides students with advanced knowledge and skills sufficient for autonomous professional practice and leadership in social work.
2. The curriculum provides advanced social work knowledge underpinned by current evidence-based practice, to enhance students' cognitive abilities, and competencies relevant to the profession.
3. The curriculum educates social work practitioners who are ethical, critical thinkers engaged in ongoing inquiry, and lifelong learning.
4. Faculty promotes and supports research and knowledge development to promote social justice; and, to improve the effectiveness of social work practice, policies, and programs.
5. Faculty engage students in leadership activities that contribute to the social work profession, Northern Kentucky University, the region, and the global community to advance social and economic justice.

There are nine program professional competencies to be demonstrated by MSW students before graduation. These competencies are outlined in CSWE, Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards, 2015 and provided below.

1. Demonstrate Ethical and 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

Each competency (above) has practice behaviors at the foundational and advanced practice levels. These practice behaviors can be accessed in the NKU MSW Field Manual learning contracts.

## **MSW Programs and Courses**

### **Standard MSW Degree Details:**

This program includes sixty (60) semester hours, and all online courses are taught in 7-week sessions. This program includes 900 hours of supervised clinical practice in a field agency which will prepare students for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) in every state. Admissions may be approved for fall, spring, or summer semesters. This program can be completed in approximately two (2) years if students follow the full-time advising schedule.

### **Advanced Standing MSW Degree Details:**

Designed for those with a BSW degree, the Advanced Standing MSW features an advanced clinical practice, trauma-informed curriculum that will nurture professional growth through applied, case-based learning. Courses are led by faculty who are trained in trauma and come from diverse areas of expertise.

This program includes 600 hours of supervised clinical practice, which will prepare students for licensure as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) in every state.

The MSW curriculum schedule is provided below.

<b>Standard MSW Program Courses</b>	<b>Advanced Standing MSW Program Courses</b>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Foundational Year</b></p> <p><b>Foundation Content Courses</b>  SWK 602: Human Behavior &amp; the Social Environment  SWK 603: Social Work Ethics  SWK 604: Contemporary Social Welfare Policy  SWK 605: Inclusion, Oppression, &amp; Social Work</p> <p><b>Foundation Practice Courses</b>  SWK 631/632/633: Practice I: Generalist Social Work Practice  SWK 634: Practice II: Communities &amp; Organizations  SWK 635: Practice III: Introduction to Assessment</p> <p><b>Foundation Research</b>  SWK 640: Social Work Research</p> <p><b>Foundation Field</b>  SWK 650: Field Experience I</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Advanced/Clinical Practice Courses</b></p> <p>SWK 636: Practice IV: Clinical Behavioral Health  SWK 637: Practice V: Groups  SWK 670: Behavioral Health Disorders &amp; Diagnosis I  SWK 671: Behavioral Health Disorders &amp; Diagnosis II  SWK 684: Trauma-Focused Care I</p> <p><b>Advanced Research</b>  SWK 641: Applied Research I  SWK 642: Applied Research II</p> <p><b>Advanced Field</b>  SWK 651: Field Experience II  SWK 652: Field Experience III  1 Approved Elective</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Advanced Year</b></p> <p><b>Advanced/Clinical Practice Courses</b>  SWK 636: Practice IV: Clinical Behavioral Health  SWK 637: Practice V: Groups  SWK 670: Behavioral Health Disorders &amp; Diagnosis I  SWK 671: Behavioral Health Disorders &amp; Diagnosis II  SWK 684: Trauma-Focused Care I</p> <p><b>Advanced Research</b>  SWK 641: Applied Research I  SWK 642: Applied Research II</p>	



<p><b>Advanced Field</b>  SWK 651: Field Experience II</p> <p>SWK 652: Field Experience III</p> <p>2 Approved Electives</p>	
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\*Students will work directly with their advisors to determine an advising plan that they will follow during their time in the MSW program.

*Foundation Curriculum for the Standard Program*

Foundation courses allow students to develop the generalist knowledge and skills necessary to apply and carry out core social work practice competencies with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Foundation practice emphasizes critical thinking, client strengths, commitment to social work values and ethical principles, self-awareness, professional development, evidence-based decision-making, multicultural competency, and social and economic justice. Foundation courses include (please note, AOL indicates courses for accelerated online students):

- SWK 602: Human Behavior & the Social Environment ○ SWK 603: Ethics
- SWK 604: Contemporary Social Welfare Policy ○ SWK 605: Inclusion, Oppression, & Social Work
- SWK 633: (non-AOL)/ 631 & 632 (AOL): Practice I: Generalist Social Work Practice ○ SWK 634: Practice II: Communities & Organizations ○ SWK 635: Practice III: Introduction to Assessment ○ SWK 640: Social Work Research ○ SWK 650: Field Experience I (300 placement hours)
- Elective (3 hours)

*Advanced Curriculum for the Standard and Advanced Standing Program*

The advanced curriculum enables graduates to move into the social work community with a combination of knowledge and skills in a broad arena, as well as in-depth knowledge and skills in a particular method, population, or area of service. The second-year courses build upon the foundation courses and therefore, are more focused, preparing students for autonomous professional social work practice in clinical behavioral health and community practice.

At the advanced level, students are expected to understand theory, analyze it for its contextual properties, and implement culturally competent practice. Additionally, students will be prepared to evaluate their practice and programs and create research questions that demonstrate the advancement of ideas with specific populations. Furthermore, students are expected to understand the connection between individual challenges and social issues and realize that impermanence and social change are

natural extensions of social work practice at all levels. They will therefore be prepared to advocate and organize to this end.

Under the supervision of program-approved field instructors, students will complete internship hours that allow them to carry out advanced curriculum objectives. In addition, after their study students will prepare a capstone project that reflects their knowledge, skills, and values as professional social workers. Advanced courses include:

- SWK 636: Practice IV Clinical Behavioral Health
- SWK 637: Practice V: Groups
- SWK 641: Applied Research I
- SWK 642: Applied Research II
- SWK 651: Field Experience II (300 placement hours)
- SWK 652: Field Experience III (300 placement hours)
- SWK 670: Behavioral Health Disorders/Diagnoses I
- SWK 671: Behavioral Health Disorders/Diagnoses II
- SWK 684: Trauma-Focused Care I
- Elective (3 hours)

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## V. Professional Performance Expectations for Social Work Students

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MSW students must adhere to the university's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities and Graduate Student Honor code found at <http://scra.nku.edu/Infostudents/Infostudents.html> and the National Association of Social Workers, [\*Code of Ethics\*](#) inside and outside of class.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) *Code of Ethics*, the NKU Code of Student Rights and Responsibility, and the NKU Graduate Student Honor Code form the basis of student conduct standards when considering each student's suitability for professional social work, and continuation in the social work program. Faculty will work collaboratively regarding students' conduct and academic concerns with the student, the School of Social Work Student Concerns Committee, and/or full social work faculty, and/or School of Social Work Director/Program Directors.

We require that students within the MSW Program understand the following in addition to adherence to the standards above: ***Adherence to the Social Media Statement of Technology and Social Media Use.***

The [Social Work Code of Ethics](#) mandates the ethical use of technology and social media. As such, we expect all of our NKU social work students to apply the principles of the Code of Ethics to their technology and social media use to ensure that their online presence does not conflict with the professional standards of social work. Examples of behaviors that violate the social work Code of Ethics as it pertains to technology and social media use include, but are not limited to:

1. Posting details, photos, videos, or other types of information about clients on social media or other online platforms.
2. Interacting with, accepting friend requests from, or sending friend requests to clients via social media or other online platforms.
3. Conducting online searches for client information that is unrelated to the therapeutic relationship.
4. Violating the privacy and confidentiality of classroom discussions (e.g., discussion board material and other class discussions that are meant to be private) via the use of technology and/or social media.

It is important to remember that our technology and social media use is representative of who we are as professionals and is representative of the School of Social Work at Northern Kentucky University. All technology and social media use should respect the confidentiality, privacy, and dignity of all clients. Evidence of violating ethical technology and social media use is subject to faculty review and may result in remediation or removal from the NKU School of Social Work. Finally, course instructions and materials are for instructional use only. All other uses are strictly prohibited. Republication or reproduction of course instructions or materials is forbidden. If you have any questions, please contact your course instructors.

### ***Professional Expectations of Student Behavior.***

#### ***Adherence to the Professional Expectations of Student Behavior Statement.***

The School of Social Work at Northern Kentucky University is mandated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) to foster and evaluate professional behavioral development for all students in the social work program. The social work program also bears a responsibility to the community at large to produce fully trained professional social workers who consciously exhibit the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession of social work. The values of the profession are codified in the NASW Code of Ethics. Given this context, all students will be expected to follow the ethical standards of behavior listed below:

**A. Accountability.** *Maintain a strong presence in all courses and demonstrate preparedness and engagement with course materials and feedback.*

Components:

- a.) Prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.
- b.) Prompt, positive, and prepared participation.
- c.) Completion of, and engagement with, all course assignments and materials.
- d.) Individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.
- e.) Welcome and incorporate constructive feedback

**B. Respect/Civility.** *Treat all peers, instructors, and community and campus contacts with dignity and respect at all times.*

Components:

- a.) Pay attention while others are communicating, and pay attention to understand rather than immediately respond.
- b.) Address faculty members by professional titles, unless otherwise requested.
- c.) Provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.
- d.) Demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.
- e.) Approach conflict positively and cooperatively.
- f.) Actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.

**C. Confidentiality.** *Treat any personal information that you learn about a peer, instructor, or client as strictly confidential, unless consultation with an appropriate faculty member is necessary.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain confidentiality with any information shared with you.

- b.) Use professional judgment when considering a disclosure of information that is very personal in a class or team setting. This time is not to be used for your own therapy or treatment. If you are struggling with challenges, please see the instructor privately for information regarding additional campus resources.
- c.) Never use the names of clients or share identifying client information in a classroom or team setting.

**D. Competence.** *Apply yourself to all of your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, and according to the timelines and expectations established by your instructors.*

Components:

- a.) Participate in your courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.
- b.) Seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.
- c.) Utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.
- d.) Own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.
- e.) Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.

**E. Integrity.** *Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Consistently strive to improve this ability as a lifelong learning goal.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.
- b.) Demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.
- c.) Self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis, and address any identified areas for improvement.
- d.) Maintain integrity when completing all coursework.

**F. Academic Accountability.** *Commit yourself to learning to communicate in a professional context.*

Components:

- a.) Do your own work, and take credit only for your own work. This includes paraphrases and citations and giving credit where credit is due.
- b.) Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and actively work to address those areas.
- c.) Complete work in a timely manner, and incorporate time to review your own work and any needed resources before submission.
- d.) Seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.

**G. Commitment to Diversity.** *Strive to become more open to people, populations, ideas, and creeds with which you may not agree. Embrace diversity as a positive component of our society.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.
- b.) Exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.

- c.) Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.

**H. Communication.** *Strive to improve non-verbal, verbal, and written communication skills. These skills are essential in our professional interactions.*

Components:

- a.) Present yourself in a positive and appropriate manner. This includes professional appearance and means that you should not wear offensive or inappropriate attire in a professional setting.
- b.) Actively maintain communication with classmates, instructors, and members of the NKU community. Self-isolation and a lack of communication are impediments to professional development.
- c.) Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication. This includes but is not limited to: in-person interactions, class discussions, and email correspondence.
- d.) Actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.

**I. Social Justice.** *Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all persons.* Components:

- a.) Develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice.
- b.) Strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.
- c.) Seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

***Required Course Progression Policy.***

Students are required to follow the course progression in their academic plan/advising schedule as recommended by the NKU MSW advisor\* and NKU MSW field director.\*

If students delay required field placements and/or required courses, then they may not be permitted to complete current classes and may not register for additional classes in the MSW program until they have completed recommended field placements and/or required courses.

In accordance with this policy, students may be removed from existing enrollment as necessary.\*\*

\*The NKU MSW advisor and the NKU MSW field director are both employees of NKU. Persons who are not employees of NKU are not permitted to guide or advise regarding student course progression.

\*\*Disclaimer: Successful registration in specific courses is contingent on students still meeting the specific course criteria at the start of the relevant term/semester. This involves a review of student records prior to the start of each new term/semester.

***Evaluation of Student Work Policy.***

Faculty members are unable to provide extra credit points or extra assignments or accept late submissions from any individual student in order to help them pass the course. The university requires faculty members to grade

the submitted student work to evaluate student understanding of and engagement with the course content. This is required so that the university has documented evidence that each student has demonstrated mastery of the course materials. This submitted evidence of student mastery is then utilized for the university to award degrees to students to indicate that the students have developed expertise in their chosen fields.

If a student does poorly on submitted class work to such an extent that it has heavily impacted their grade(s), it is critically important that the student re-takes the course so that they can master the required content. All graduating NKU MSW students receive the same NKU MSW degree; therefore, all graduating NKU MSW students must successfully complete the required coursework.

If you feel that you have extenuating circumstances that make it difficult for you to engage with the course and complete assignments in a manner that demonstrates your potential, please take immediate action to advocate for your own learning experience. Available campus (and online) resources at NKU include: Health, Counseling, and Student Wellness (HCSW); the Office for Student Accessibility; TRIO Student Support Services; University Connect and Persist (UCAP), and many other supports for students. Please visit the NKU website or contact your course instructor and/or your advisor in order to explore what services might be available for your situation.

Your course instructor cannot provide accommodations without official documentation of the need for said accommodations. To obtain documentation of the need for accommodations, please schedule a time to visit the appropriate office and follow their specific procedures.

### ***Pregrading and Assignment Review Policy.***

School of Social Work faculty members are not able to offer pre-grading/reviews of work prior to submission. This is because faculty members cannot offer this for all of the students, and so it would create an unfair advantage in violation of professional ethics. However, SSW faculty members can respond to any specific questions regarding your work or your revisions. If there is anything specific that you are feeling uncertain about, please contact your assigned course instructor for guidance.

Your course instructor can provide links and information regarding available campus services to support students, such as the NKU Writing Center.

### ***Progression Requirements for Professional Performance Issues.***

In addition to meeting the academic standards set forth above, students are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible, and professional manner. To this end, they are expected to adhere to the standards of professional ethics and practice set forth by the MSW Program and the National Association of Social Workers.

The faculty will regularly monitor not only students' academic progress but also personal and interpersonal dynamics that may affect their performance as social work professionals. The purpose of this monitoring process is to ensure that all graduates of the Northern Kentucky University MSW Program are not experiencing personal and interpersonal characteristics that interfere with their professionalism or helping capacity.

As future professional social workers, the faculty expects students to exhibit the following personal and interpersonal characteristics (Professional Expectations of Student Behavior) throughout their time in the program:

- Accountability

- Respect and Civility
- Confidentiality
- Competence
- Integrity
- Academic Accountability
- Commitment to Diversity

These professional expectations of student behavior are presented in greater detail on pages 11-13 of this handbook.

Throughout the program, each Professional Performance Standard will be rated as “Below Expectations,” “Meets Expectations,” or “Exceeds Expectations,” as described in the Criteria for Professional Performance Standards Evaluation (Appendix A). Students will be rated as a component of every following MSW course.

Students receiving a rating “Below Expectations” on one or more of the Professional Performance standards will be considered deficient in professional performance and may be subject to Student Remediation.

***Abstinence from Unacceptable Behaviors.***

Unacceptable behavior is inconsistent with the behavior described by the School of Social Work at NKU, as mandated by the Code of Ethics and the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). In determining whether the behavior is acceptable or unacceptable, consider how you would feel or react if you were on the receiving end of the behavior in question. The information below provides further guidance on what is unacceptable behavior in the School of Social Work at Northern Kentucky University. This behavior is unacceptable towards peers, faculty, field supervisors, or any other person or entity with which you are interacting as a social worker/social work student. Examples of Unacceptable Behavior which are considered unacceptable in the School of Social Work at NKU include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a) Aggressive or abusive behavior, such as making threatening gestures or engaging in actual violence or assault
- b) Verbal abuse, such as yelling, screaming, or using abusive or offensive language
- c) Bullying, harassment, stalking, or intimidation
- d) Being under the influence of illicit drugs or impaired by alcohol
- e) Unwelcome physical contact including that of a sexual or threatening nature
- f) Teasing, name-calling, or ridicule
- g) Engaging in malicious gossip or complaints
- h) Producing abusive or harassing notes, emails, telephone calls, text messages
- i) Belittling the opinions of others
- j) Responding poorly to constructive feedback. This includes yelling at instructors, approaching your work with a defensive attitude, etc....
- k) Using offensive gestures and behavior
- l) Stealing or misuse of university resources
- m) Engaging in inappropriate technology or social media use (see Social Media statement above)

### ***Student Remediation and Retention.***

When the School of Social Work Faculty become aware of an academic and/or professional dispositional issue exhibited by a student, an appropriate faculty member will first discuss the concern(s) raised with the student directly. Examples of such concerns include deficiencies in the areas of academic performance, clinical effectiveness or judgment, or interpersonal functioning.

If the faculty member determines that the discussion(s) resolved the concern, no further action will be required. If such discussions do not resolve the concern, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The faculty member will document the specific concerns and complete a Professional Performance Evaluation (PPE).
2. The faculty member will provide the student with a copy of the documentation and the PPE.
3. The faculty member will provide written notification to the MSW Program Director regarding the identified concerns.
4. The faculty member will consult with the MSW Program Advisor, the MSW Program Director, and any associated faculty who wish to contribute to developing a Professional Development Plan (PDP). The PDP will contain the following elements (see Appendices B and C for examples):
  - a. Expectations for the student;
  - b. Specific behaviors required of the student;
  - c. Remediation tasks to support the student's success; and,
  - d. Consequences for not meeting the expectations and behaviors outlined in the PDP.
5. As soon as is practical, the student and the issuing faculty will meet to discuss the PDP.
  - a. The issuing faculty and the student will sign the PDP form to verify their understanding of the presented concerns, the required remedial actions, and the schedule for completing them.
  - b. Both the student and issuing faculty will receive copies of the signed PDP, and a copy will be forwarded to the student's academic advisor and the MSW Program Director.
6. If the student fails to show reasonable progress in meeting the conditions of the PDP, as determined by the issuing faculty, the student will be required to attend a review meeting to include the issuing faculty, the academic advisor, and the MSW Program Director.
7. After such a meeting with the student, the issuing faculty and academic advisor will consult the full School of Social Work faculty regarding the development of alternative remedial strategies and/or evaluation of the student's fitness for continuation in the MSW Program.
  - a. If a new or revised PDP is developed, the new PDP will be signed by the student, the issuing faculty, and the academic advisor, and progress towards completion will be monitored.
  - b. If the SSW faculty determines that a new or revised PDP will not likely help remediate the concerns raised, the student will be informed that they will be dismissed from the MSW Program and cannot enroll in social work courses, even as a non-degree seeking student.
8. The student will be informed of the decision to dismiss them from the MSW Program in writing. The writing will include notice of appeal rights and that they may petition for reinstatement into the program after 12 months. The policies and procedures for pursuing an appeal of such a decision are available here: <http://scra.nku.edu/policies/student-rights.html>

NOTICE: Faculty will initiate the Professional Performance Evaluation protocol at any time for students who engage in illegal or unethical activities or for students whose professional performance is deemed to present



an immediate threat to the well-being of others. In such cases, and depending upon the nature of the concern, the Social Work Faculty may recommend dismissal from the MSW Program without the opportunity for student remediation.

After a period of 12 months, a dismissed student may petition for reinstatement into the program. In order to petition for reinstatement, the student must reapply to the MSW program and complete the following additional requirements:

1. Submit an essay (1-page minimum) describing what change and/or growth has occurred that will help them to be successful in the program
2. Submit 2 letters of recommendation from supervisors/employers
3. Engage in an interview with the School of Social Work faculty

### ***Recommendation Letter Etiquette***

Professors take the writing of recommendation letters very seriously, and they have the same expectations of their students. Recommendations reflect not only the quality of the student but also the integrity of the professor and Northern Kentucky University. Please adhere to the guidelines below and the Student Recommendation Request Form (Appendix D) when requesting a recommendation from your professor.

1. Choose a faculty member who knows you well, preferably in a variety of contexts. Employers, scholarship committees, and graduate schools review many recommendation letters, so the more specific a letter is, the more effective it will be.
2. Make a formal request to your professor (by email or by appointment), asking if they would be willing to write a letter or fill out a form on your behalf.
3. Provide your professor with information about yourself and what you are applying for. The more professors know about you and what you are applying for, the more easily they can tailor the letter toward a specific audience. Please review the Student Recommendation Request Form in appendix D and prepare the outlined materials for your professor.
4. Ask early. Contact your professor or make an appointment to discuss the recommendation at least three weeks in advance of the deadline—preferably a month or more, especially if you need multiple letters. This timeline does not include university holidays and breaks, when many faculty are not on contract with the university, so please plan early. Professors have very busy schedules and need ample time to write an impactful letter.
5. Never assume that the professor will be willing to write a letter. Always ask first, even if the professor has written a letter for you in the past. You should also ask for permission to list a professor's name as a reference on an application, even if no letter is required.
6. Professors have the right to decline to provide a recommendation if they feel that they are not best suited to provide the recommendation, or if the student did not adhere to the guidelines when requesting the recommendation.
7. If a professor agrees to provide a recommendation, students may request that the professor send them an email to confirm that the letter has been sent.

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## **VI. Field Education**

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Field education is an integral part of the Master of Social Work curriculum. Field education is an internship that takes place in selected agencies and organizations, located throughout Northern Kentucky and Greater Cincinnati, which represent a broad range of social services. Field placements are approved based on the quality of their professional practice, commitment to social justice and to addressing social work problems, interest in participating in professional education, ability to make qualified MSW personnel and resources available to assure the learning opportunities are available so that field students can demonstrate competencies in field. MSW field supervisors are responsible for teaching and supervising MSW students in their field placements. The MSW Field Director is administratively responsible for field education.

Foundation coursework prepares the social work student to enter their initial field experience with the generalist knowledge and skills necessary to apply and carry out core social work competencies with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. The foundation field experience, taken by all MSW standard program students, is completed after eighteen (18) hours of foundation coursework. The initial field experience, Field Experience I, consists of 300 placement hours within the agency, along with a field seminar that promotes the integration of coursework with field practice. The foundation generalist experience also encompasses a range of theoretical concepts and models to develop a breadth of learning and establish a broad base for practice.

The advanced curriculum, taken by all MSW students, continues this commitment throughout the next two field experiences of 300 hours each, Field Experience II and Field Experience III. Advanced field experiences provide opportunities for the student to apply evidence-informed practice skills and theoretical knowledge learned through the advanced curriculum to a particular method, population, or area of service in their chosen field setting. In the advanced field experiences, a field seminar will again provide the opportunity for integration of the advanced curriculum competencies and practice behaviors.

The student, field agency, field instructor, and MSW Field Director work collaboratively to decide on the concentration field placement, with the view of developing the special knowledge and depth of skill needed for professional practice in a designated area of concentration. This advanced experience is designed to build on the student's foundation year and to develop knowledge and skills within the concentration the student has selected.

Each internship in field education is made on an individual basis, which takes into consideration the following: self-determination, geographic location, previous experiences, future goals, professional interests, and special needs. In these placements, students engage in selected and organized social work activities that provide practical experience in applying skills learned in the classroom. A student must complete and receive credit for a minimum of 300 hours in the foundation year and 600 hours in the concentration year of field placement to be awarded the Master of Social Work degree. Additional information regarding field education may be located in the MSW Field Manual.

## **Requirements in Field Courses in: Standard MSW & Advanced Standing MSW**

In order to successfully complete foundational field the student must successfully complete the entire 300 hours of field placement.

In order to successfully complete advanced field the student must successfully complete both parts of the placement, the entire 600 hours of field placement. Additionally, Field II and III are taken in succession with SWK 652 immediately following SWK 651. Students may not have a gap in between Field II and III. Any exceptions would only be due to extreme circumstances and must be approved by the MSW Program Director and MSW Field Director. Only cases with a one-semester gap in between will be considered for an exception. Students who have paused in their MSW program, and had previously started Field, but withdrew, must retake SWK 651.

If a grade lower than a B- is earned in SWK 651 it will result in the student needing to repeat and successfully pass with a B- or better SWK 651.

If a grade lower than a B- is earned in SWK 652 it will result in the student needing to repeat and successfully pass with a B- or better both SWK 651 and SWK 652.

For example:

- Student A receives a C+ in SWK 651. That student must repeat SWK 651 before they will be allowed to move on to SWK 652.
- Student B received an A- in SWK 651 but a C in SWK 652. That student must retake SWK 651 as well as SWK 652.
- Student C receives a B in SWK 651 and a B- in SWK 652. This student has successfully completed Field II & Field III thus completing all field requirements.

Course List Reference:

- SWK 650- Field Experience I
- SWK 651- Field Experience II
- SWK 652- Field Experience III

Additional Policies:

- No student is permitted to register for field I or field II (SWK 650 or SWK 651) without consent and approval of the MSW Field Director. The student must have secured a placement in order to be approved. Student should obtain permission from the Field Director who will then send an email to MSW Graduate Coordinator requesting a permit for student.
- Students will stay with the same field instructor for SWK 651 and SWK 652 and in the same section.
- Students delaying foundational field will not be permitted to take any classes considered advanced, which may result in the student not taking any classes until foundational field is completed.

*Northern Kentucky University*  
**Criteria for Professional Performance Evaluation**

School of Social Work

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

**A. Accountability.** *Maintain a strong presence in all courses and demonstrate preparedness and engagement with course materials and feedback.*

Components:

- a.) Prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.
- b.) Prompt, positive, and prepared participation.
- c.) Completion of, and engagement with, all course assignments and materials.
- d.) Individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.
- e.) Welcome and incorporate constructive feedback

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not demonstrate prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.		Did demonstrate prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.		Modeled consistently prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.	
B.	Did not demonstrate prompt, positive, and prepared participation.		Did demonstrate prompt, positive, and prepared participation.		Modeled consistently prompt, positive, and prepared participation.	

C.	Did not complete and engage with all course assignments and materials.		Did complete and engage with all course assignments and materials.		Worked actively and consistently to complete and engage with all course assignments and materials.	
D.	Did not demonstrate individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.		Did demonstrate individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.		Demonstrated consistent individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.	
E.	Did not welcome and incorporate constructive feedback.		Did welcome and incorporate constructive feedback.		Solicited, welcomed, and incorporated constructive feedback.	

**B. Respect/Civility.** *Treat all peers, instructors, and community and campus contacts with dignity and respect at all times.*

Components:

- a.) Pay attention while others are communicating, and pay attention to understand rather than immediately respond.
- b.) Address faculty members by professional titles, unless otherwise requested.
- c.) Provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.
- d.) Demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.
- d.) Approach conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.
- e.) Actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not pay attention while others were communicating, and paid attention to immediately respond rather than to understand.		Paid attention while others were communicating, and paid attention to understand rather than to immediately respond.		Paid obvious attention while others were communicating, and offered feedback and engagement with the communications of others.	

B.	Did not address faculty members by professional titles.		Did address faculty members by professional titles.		Addressed faculty members by professional titles and requested clarification when uncertain of titles.	
C.	Did not provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.		Did provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.		Provided and solicited consistent feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.	
D.	Did not demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.		Did demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.		Modeled consistent professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.	
E.	Did not approach conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.		Did approach conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.		Modeled professional skills in approaching and navigating conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.	
F.	Did not actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.		Did actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.		Modeled consistent inclusion of and engagement with team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.	

**C. Confidentiality.** *Treat any personal information that you learn about a peer, instructor, or client as strictly confidential, unless consultation with an appropriate faculty member is necessary.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain confidentiality with any information shared with you.
- b.) Use professional judgment when considering a disclosure of information that is very personal in a class or team setting. This time is not to be used for your own therapy or treatment. If you are struggling with challenges, please see the instructor privately for information regarding additional campus resources.
- c.) Never use the names of clients or share identifying client information in a classroom or team setting.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

<b>Components</b>	<b>“Below Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	<b>“Meets Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	<b>“Exceeds Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not maintain confidentiality.		Did maintain confidentiality.		Demonstrated consistent adherence to confidentiality expectations.	
B.	Did not use professional judgment when sharing personal information, and/or used class or team settings to disclose personal information.		Used professional judgment when sharing personal information, and did not use class or team settings to disclose personal information.		Demonstrated consistent professional judgment regarding disclosure of personal information.	
C.	Did not adhere to confidentiality standards regarding disclosure of client names or client identifying information.		Did adhere to confidentiality standards regarding disclosure of client names or client identifying information.		Demonstrated consistent adherence to confidentiality standards regarding client names and information.	

**D. Competence.** *Apply yourself to all of your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, and according to the timelines and expectations established by your instructors.*

Components:

- a.) Participate in your courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.
- b.) Seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.
- c.) Utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library. d.) Own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.
- e.) Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not participate in courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.		Did participate in courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.		Successfully participated in courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus. Located and accessed additional materials to advance individual learning and professional goals.	
B.	Did not seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.		Did seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.		Consistently demonstrated active engagement with appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.	
C.	Did not utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.		Did utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.		Actively and consistently utilized available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.	
D.	Did not own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.		Did own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework		Actively and consistently owned responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.	
E.	Did not strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.		Did strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.		Modeled active awareness of and steps to address any personal challenges that might impact effectiveness with clients.	

**E. Integrity.** *Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Consistently strive to improve this ability as a lifelong learning goal.*

Components:

a.) Maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners



- b.) Demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.
- c.) Self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis, and address any identified areas for improvement.
- d.) Maintain integrity when completing all coursework.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.		Did maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.		Modeled consistent professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.	
B.	Did not demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.		Did demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.		Consistently modeled and demonstrated commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.	
C.	Did not self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis. Did not address any identified areas for improvement.		Did self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis. Did address any identified areas for improvement.		Actively and consistently completed self-evaluation of responsibility and commitment on a regular basis. Did address any identified areas for improvement.	
D.	Did not maintain integrity when completing all coursework.		Did maintain integrity when completing all coursework.		Actively and consistently maintained integrity when completing all coursework.	

**F. Academic Accountability.** *Commit yourself to learning to communicate in a professional context.*

Components:

- a.) Do your own work, and take credit only for your own work. This includes paraphrases and citations and giving credit where credit is due.

- b.) Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and actively work to address those areas.
- c.) Complete work in a timely manner, and incorporate time to review your own work and access any needed resources before submission.
- d.) Seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

<b>Components</b>	<b>“Below Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	<b>“Meets Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	<b>“Exceeds Expectations” Description</b>	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not complete own work and/or take credit only for own work. Did not properly cite or paraphrase, or give credit where credit is due.		Did complete own work and/or take credit only for own work. Did properly cite or paraphrase, or give credit where credit is due.		Consistently completed own work and/or took credit only for own work. Consistently used proper citations and paraphrases, and gave credit where credit was due.	
B.	Did not acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and did not actively work to address those areas.		Did acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and did actively work to address those areas.		Consistently modeled and demonstrated commitment to acknowledge areas where improvement is needed and did actively work to address those areas.	
C.	Did not complete work in a timely manner, and did not incorporate time to review own work and access any needed resources before submission.		Did complete work in a timely manner, and did incorporate time to review own work and access any needed resources before submission.		Actively and consistently completed work in a timely manner, and incorporated time to review own work and access any needed resources before submission.	

D.	Did not seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.		Did seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.		Actively and consistently sought out and benefitted from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.	
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**G. Commitment to Diversity.** *Strive to become more open to people, populations, ideas, and creeds with which you may not agree. Embrace diversity as a positive component of our society.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.
- b.) Exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.
- c.) Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.		Did maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.		Consistently and actively maintained speech and professional interactions that were respectful and kind.	
B.	Did not exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.		Did exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.		Consistently modeled and demonstrated a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.	
C.	Did not demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an active		Did demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an		Actively and consistently demonstrated an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an	

	engagement with evolving standards and expectations.		active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.		active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.	
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**H. Communication.** *Strive to improve non-verbal, verbal, and written communication skills. These skills are essential in our professional interactions.*

Components:

- a.) Present yourself in a positive and appropriate manner. This includes professional appearance and means that you should not wear offensive or inappropriate attire in a professional setting.
- b.) Actively maintain communication with classmates, instructors, and members of the NKU community. Self-isolation and a lack of communication are impediments to professional development.
- c.) Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication. This includes but is not limited to: in-person interactions, class discussions, and email correspondence. d.) Actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not present in a positive and appropriate manner.		Did present in a positive and appropriate manner.		Consistently and actively presented in a positive and appropriate manner.	
B.	Did not actively maintain communication with classmates, your instructors, and members of the NKU community.		Did actively maintain communication with classmates, your instructors, and members of the NKU community.		Consistently and actively maintained communication with classmates, your instructors, and members of the NKU community.	
C.	Did not practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication.		Did practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication.		Actively and consistently practiced positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication.	

D.	Did not actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.		Did actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.		Actively and consistently demonstrated appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.	

**I. Social Justice.** *Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all persons.*

Components:

- a.) Develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice. b.) Strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.
- c.) Seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Please enter a checkmark next to the most appropriate assessment for each component included below.

Components	“Below Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment is “below expectations.”	“Meets Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “meets expectations.”	“Exceeds Expectations” Description	Place check below if the assessment “exceeds expectations.”
A.	Did not develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impeded the experience of social justice.		Did develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice.		Consistently and actively demonstrated understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice.	
B.	Did not strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.		Did strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.		Consistently and actively strove to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.	

C.	Did not seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.		Did seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.		Actively and consistently sought and embraced learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.	
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**Appendix B: Professional Development Plan, Field Example**

*Northern Kentucky University*  
Professional Development Plan (FIELD EXAMPLE)

School of Social Work

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student email & NKU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

For you to continue to progress toward receiving your MSW degree at Northern Kentucky University, you are required to engage in the following behaviors that relate to the competencies addressed within our program’s retention policy.

**A. Accountability.** *Maintain a strong presence in all courses and demonstrate preparedness and engagement with course materials and feedback.*

Components:

- a.) Prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.
- b.) Prompt, positive, and prepared participation.
- c.) Completion of, and engagement with, all course assignments and materials.
- d.) Individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.
- e.) Welcome and incorporate constructive feedback

**B. Respect/Civility.** *Treat all peers, instructors, and community and campus contacts with dignity and respect at all times.*

Components:

- a.) Pay attention while others are communicating, and pay attention to understand rather than to immediately respond.
- b.) Address faculty members by professional titles, unless otherwise requested.
- c.) Provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.
- d.) Demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.

- e.) Approach conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.
- f.) Actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.

**C. Confidentiality.** *Treat any personal information that you learn about a peer, instructor, or client as strictly confidential, unless consultation with an appropriate faculty member is necessary.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain confidentiality with any information shared with you.
- b.) Use professional judgment when considering a disclosure of information that is very personal in a class or team setting. This time is not to be used for your own therapy or treatment. If you are struggling with challenges, please see the instructor privately for information regarding additional campus resources.
- c.) Never use the names of clients or share identifying client information in a classroom or team setting.

**D. Competence.** *Apply yourself to all of your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, and according to the timelines and expectations established by your instructors.*

Components:

- a.) Participate in your courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.
- b.) Seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.
- c.) Utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.
- d.) Own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.
- e.) Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.

**E. Integrity.** *Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Consistently strive to improve this ability as a lifelong learning goal.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.
- b.) Demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.
- c.) Self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis, and address any identified areas for improvement.
- d.) Maintain integrity when completing all coursework.

**F. Academic Accountability.** *Commit yourself to learning to communicate in a professional context.*



Components:

- a.) Do your own work, and take credit only for your own work. This includes paraphrases and citations and giving credit where credit is due.
- b.) Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and actively work to address those areas.
- c.) Complete work in a timely manner, and incorporate time to review your own work and any needed resources before submission.
- d.) Seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.

**G. Commitment to Diversity.** *Strive to become more open to people, populations, ideas, and creeds with which you may not agree. Embrace diversity as a positive component of our society.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.
- b.) Exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.
- c.) Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.

**H. Communication.** *Strive to improve non-verbal, verbal, and written communication skills. These skills are essential in our professional interactions.*

Components:

- a.) Present yourself in a positive and appropriate manner. This includes professional appearance and means that you should not wear offensive or inappropriate attire in a professional setting.
- b.) Actively maintain communication with classmates, instructors, and members of the NKU community. Self-isolation and a lack of communication are impediments to professional development.
- c.) Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication. This includes but is not limited to: in-person interactions, class discussions, and email correspondence.
- d.) Actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.

**H. Social Justice.** *Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all persons.*

Components:

- a.) Develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice.
- b.) Strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.

- c.) Seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

To successfully engage in the aforementioned behaviors, the student will:

- 1.) Attend therapy sessions with a licensed mental health professional to improve interpersonal dynamics that relate to the therapy and supervision process as mentioned previously in this document (e.g., the ability to empathize with clients) and the student's ability to comprehend, accept, incorporate, and apply supervisor feedback in clinical practice. A letter from the mental health professional indicating that you have successfully addressed the aforementioned issues in therapy will be required before you can re-enroll in practicum. Please present this letter to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the practicum course.
- 2.) Be required to attend 6 hours' worth of supervision-related workshops that are preapproved by the MSW Program Director before you can re-enroll in your practicum course. Please present proof of having completed these workshops to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the practicum course.
- 3.) Write a 10-page (double-spaced, American Psychological Association style) essay, which applies the supervision information you learned in your workshops to the supervision conflicts you were confronted with in practicum. In your essay, you should especially focus on issues related to accepting supervisor feedback. The faculty will evaluate this statement, and you will not be able to register for practicum until the faculty is satisfied that you can adequately understand feedback within the supervision relationship as described in this document. Please present this essay to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the practicum course and after you have completed the first and second requirements in this section.
- 4.) Meet with the MSW Field Director every 4 weeks to discuss progress and concerns related to achieving these goals and to receive feedback about your progress toward these goals.
- 5.) Be allowed to have a different practicum course instructor/supervisor (from his or her original practicum instructor/supervisor).
- 6.) Successful completion (earn an A or B grade) of practicum. You cannot register for practicum until you have successfully completed the first, second, and third requirements in this section. Any grade of C or lower in practicum will result in your automatic and permanent removal from the MSW program.

Consistent with our program policy, you will only have one more opportunity to successfully complete this course because you have failed practicum once.

I understand and agree to the conditions of this document. Any breach of this agreement constitutes grounds for being removed from the social work program. I understand that I can appeal this plan *prior* to signing the agreement/plan. I understand and agree to all of the conditions of this document. If I do not follow through on completing all of the tasks outlined in this contract within 1 year, I understand that I will be terminated from the social work program. I also understand the program's retention policy and am clear that there are certain behaviors that, if violated, will supersede this agreement and may result in immediate removal from the program (e.g., ethics violations).

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Date

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Student Signature

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Date

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Faculty Representative

**Appendix C: Professional Development Plan, Academic Example**

***Northern Kentucky University***  
**Professional Development Plan (ACADEMICS EXAMPLE)**

School of Social Work

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student email & NKU ID: \_\_\_\_\_

For you to continue to progress toward receiving your MSW degree at Northern Kentucky University, the School of Social Work faculty is collectively requiring that you engage in the following behaviors that relate to the competencies addressed within our program’s retention policy.

**A. Accountability.** *Maintain a strong presence in all courses and demonstrate preparedness and engagement with course materials and feedback.*

Components:

- a.) Prompt, positive, engaged, and prepared engagement.
- b.) Prompt, positive, and prepared participation.
- c.) Completion of, and engagement with, all course assignments and materials.
- d.) Individual responsibility for course assignments, instructions, and expectations.
- e.) Welcome and incorporate constructive feedback

**B. Respect/Civility.** *Treat all peers, instructors, and community and campus contacts with dignity and respect at all times.*

Components:

- a.) Pay attention while others are communicating, and pay attention to understand rather than to immediately respond.
- b.) Address faculty members by professional titles, unless otherwise requested.
- c.) Provide feedback and engagement in a constructive and supportive manner.
- d.) Demonstrate professionalism and kindness in all professional communications.

- e.) Approach conflict in a positive and cooperative manner.
- f.) Actively include team members and classmates in class activities and discussions.

**C. Confidentiality.** *Treat any personal information that you learn about a peer, instructor, or client as strictly confidential, unless consultation with an appropriate faculty member is necessary.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain confidentiality with any information shared with you.
- b.) Use professional judgment when considering a disclosure of information that is very personal in a class or team setting. This time is not to be used for your own therapy or treatment. If you are struggling with challenges, please see the instructor privately for information regarding additional campus resources.
- c.) Never use the names of clients or share identifying client information in a classroom or team setting.

**D. Competence.** *Apply yourself to all of your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, and according to the timelines and expectations established by your instructors.*

Components:

- a.) Participate in your courses with the appropriate books, materials, and syllabus, including locating and accessing additional materials as warranted.
- b.) Seek out appropriate support in a timely manner when having difficulties to ensure success in each class.
- c.) Utilize available campus resources, including the information technology help desk, the writing center, and Steely Library.
- d.) Own responsibility for the quality of completed coursework.
- e.) Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal challenges that may impact effectiveness with clients, and actively address those areas.

**E. Integrity.** *Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Consistently strive to improve this ability as a lifelong learning goal.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain professionalism in interactions with peers, instructors, and campus and community partners.
- b.) Demonstrate commitment to positive, respectful, and honest interactions.
- c.) Self-evaluate responsibility and commitment on a regular basis, and address any identified areas for improvement.
- d.) Maintain integrity when completing all coursework.

**F. Academic Accountability.** *Commit yourself to learning to communicate in a professional context.*

Components:

- a.) Do your own work, and take credit only for your own work. This includes paraphrases and citations and giving credit where credit is due.
- b.) Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed, and actively work to address those areas.
- c.) Complete work in a timely manner, and incorporate time to review your own work and any needed resources before submission.
- d.) Seek out and benefit from constructive feedback. This includes peer review, instructor reviews, and utilization of the campus writing center.

**G. Commitment to Diversity.** *Strive to become more open to people, populations, ideas, and creeds with which you may not agree. Embrace diversity as a positive component of our society.*

Components:

- a.) Maintain speech and professional interactions that are respectful and kind.
- b.) Exhibit a willingness to serve with and learn about and from diverse clientele, colleagues, and communities.
- c.) Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact, and an active engagement with evolving standards and expectations.

**H. Communication.** *Strive to improve non-verbal, verbal, and written communication skills. These skills are essential in our professional interactions.*

Components:

- a.) Present yourself in a positive and appropriate manner. This includes professional appearance and means that you should not wear offensive or inappropriate attire in a professional setting.
- b.) Actively maintain communication with classmates, instructors, and members of the NKU community. Self-isolation and a lack of communication are impediments to professional development.
- c.) Practice positive, constructive, respectful, and professional communication skills in non-verbal, verbal, and written communication. This includes but is not limited to: in-person interactions, class discussions, and email correspondence.
- d.) Actively demonstrate appropriate body language, empathy, and listening skills in professional interactions.

**I. Social Justice.** *Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all persons.* Components:

- a.) Develop and demonstrate an understanding of how personal and institutional factors impede the experience of social justice.
- b.) Strive to learn about and participate in social justice initiatives.

- c.) Seek and embrace learning opportunities about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

To successfully engage in the aforementioned behaviors, the student will:

- 1.) Actively utilize available supports including the NKU Writing Center, Steely Library, and additional identified support options to develop and strengthen appropriate academic skills as mentioned previously in this document (e.g., academic accountability). The student must demonstrate the ability to locate and utilize information and resources, comprehend course materials and expectations, and apply instructor feedback in coursework. The student must document the utilization of available resources, including dates and times of said utilization, to a satisfactory level of at least once per week for a minimum of four weeks. Please present this documentation, along with the revised coursework, to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the corresponding course.
- 2.) Be required to attend 6 hours worth of professionalism-related workshops that are preapproved by the MSW Program Director before you can progress with your coursework. It is the student's responsibility to provide a list of options for professionalism-related workshops, including relevant information and contact information regarding said workshops. The MSW Program Director must approve any proposed workshops *prior to the student's participation* in order for the workshops to count toward this requirement. Please present proof of having completed these workshops to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the corresponding course.
- 3.) Write a 10-page (double-spaced, American Psychological Association style) essay, which applies the professionalism information you learned in your workshops to the academic conflicts you were confronted with in your coursework. In your essay, you should especially focus on issues related to accepting and implementing instructor feedback. The faculty will evaluate this statement, and you will not be able to register for the course until the faculty is satisfied that you can adequately understand feedback within the instructor relationship as described in this document. Please present this essay to the MSW Program Director within 2 weeks of attempting to register for the corresponding course and after you have completed the first and second requirements in this section.
- 4.) Meet with the MSW Program Director every 4 weeks to discuss progress and concerns related to achieving these goals and to receive feedback about your progress toward these goals.
- 5.) Be allowed to have a different course instructor (from his or her original course instructor/supervisor).

- 6.) Successful completion (earn an A or B grade) of the course. You cannot register for this course until you have successfully completed the first, second, and third requirements in this section. Any grade of C or lower in the course will result in your automatic and permanent removal from the MSW program. Consistent with our program policy, you will only have one more opportunity to successfully complete this course because you have failed the course once.

I understand and agree to the conditions of this document. Any breach of this agreement constitutes grounds for being removed from the social work program. I understand that I can appeal this plan *prior* to signing the agreement/plan. I understand and agree to all of the conditions of this document. If I do not follow through on completing all of the tasks outlined in this contract within 1 year, I understand that I will be terminated from the social work program. I also understand the program's retention policy and am clear that there are certain behaviors that, if violated, will supersede this agreement and may result in immediate removal from the program (e.g., ethics violations).

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Date

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Student Signature

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Date

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Faculty Representative



## Appendix D: Student Recommendation Request Form

### Student Recommendation Request Form

Thank you for contacting me regarding a recommendation letter. In order for me to consider this request, please share the following with me in *one single email* at least three weeks prior to the due date for your recommendation (this excludes university holidays and breaks):

1. Please fill out the attached table for each program for which you would like to request a recommendation letter.
2. Please send me a copy of your updated resume.
3. Please send me any other relevant information or materials.
4. Please include this additional information in your email to me:
  - a. what classes you took with me as the course instructor
  - b. when those classes were (semester/year)
  - c. what your grade was for each of the classes that you took with me
  - d. any notable interactions that you had with me during our time working together
5. Please also include a list of 3-5 positive things that I could highlight about you and your work, with at least 2 of those things being directly observable by me (such as your collaboration on a team project).

I am so excited for you with this next step! Thank you for reaching out, and please stay in touch.

Sincerely,

Specific program to which you are applying	Program website	Program focus	Deadline for recommendation letter	Information regarding how to send my letters in, either via email (if so, please include the address) or snail mail (if so, please include an addressed, stamped envelope).	Why you are a good fit for this program and focus	Specific courses and projects that you have worked on that evidence your fit for this program (please list in this table)

1.)						
2.)						
3.)						