# Procederes for Admission to the Major

## Admission Process

The admissions process and criteria reflects the commitment of the Messiah University Department of Social Work to prepare students for entry-level generalist social work practice and graduate school attendance. It is the belief of social work faculty that students in the social work major must understand and demonstrate the competencies, values, ethics, and professional behaviors that uphold the values and ethics of the social work profession and Messiah University. Students must follow a two-step process for admission into the social work Department.

## Step 1:

Declaration of social work as a major by formally completing required paperwork requesting the social work major and submitting necessary forms to the Office of the Registrar. Students may declare social work as part of the admissions process when being accepted to Messiah. Students are expected to select a major no later than the end of the second semester of the sophomore year in order to allow adequate time for meeting graduation requirements in that major. The social work major does not grant students course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

## Step 2:

Application for formal admission into the major occurs when the following criteria are met:

1. Completion of the following courses

1. SOWK 120 Intro to Social Work and Social Welfare
2. SOWK 221 Human Behavior in the Social Environment
3. SOWK 250 Social Work Practice with Individuals, SOWK 251: Field Experience: Practice with Individuals.
4. Satisfactory progress in SOWK 360 Social Work Practice with Families, SOWK 361: Field Experience: Practice with Families.
5. Students will complete a formal admission application (found on the Department of Social Work website or can be obtained from social work faculty) during the spring semester of their sophomore year or when the above criteria are met. Applications should be completed and submitted by February 1st to the Department Chair through the Department’s administrative assistant (Date may vary depending on academic calendar).

## Application Directions

Student is to submit an electronic copy of the Application to the Major by the date and time identified in the SOWK360 course to the Department Chair’s assistant, Debbie Chopka at [dchopka@messiah.edu](mailto:dchopka@messiah.edu). Student is expected to follow APA style and address the five areas listed below. Each of the five sections must be identified with a heading within the application. The application should include a cover page, reference page and an abstract page (student should use the application to the major checklist for the abstract page). Student is also expected to provide a brief introduction for the application and follow word count expectations. Clarity and conciseness are essential components of this assignment. Therefore, first person point of view is acceptable when appropriate, to assist with conciseness and to avoid ambiguity.

*Student must address the following information in the application to the major:*

1. *Satisfactory Academic Progress and Competency Development:*
2. *Satisfactory Progress in all SOWK Courses:* Satisfactory completion or showing satisfactory progress in SOWK120, SOWK221, SOWK250, SOWK251, SOWK360, and SOWK361. (Students taking additional SOWK courses at time of application must also show satisfactory progress in those courses). Student is required to provide grades of any SOWK courses completed and current grade average at time of application submission in any current social work courses.
3. *Satisfactory GPA in the Major:* 2.7 GPA or higher in the Social Work Major. Student is required to submit major GPA.
4. Satisfactory Cumulative GPA: Overall GPA of 2.0 or higher. Student is required to submit overall GPA.
5. *Discussion of Satisfactory Academic Progress:* Student is required to provide evidence of satisfactory progress (SOWK course grades or grade average of current courses, and major and overall GPA) in the major as an introduction to the section on academic progress. Student demonstrating satisfactory progress will articulate a specific plan for how she/he will continue to maintain in good academic standing in the department.
6. Student not meeting satisfactory progress is expected to address the barriers to satisfactory progress and provide a specific plan for attaining good academic standing in the major. Additionally, any student with a grade of lower than a 2.3 (C+) in any SOWK class must submit a plan for retaking the course as discussed with her or his academic advisor (250 words maximum).
7. *Satisfactory Understanding and Support for the NASW Social Work Code of Ethics:* Student is required to review the *NASW Code of Ethics* and summarize her/his understanding and support for the values and ethics identified in the *Code*. Student is expected to note the reading, understanding and level of support for the *Code of Ethics* as an introduction to the section on Values and Ethics. Student is then expected to identify a specific social work value and the importance of that value in her/his development as a professional social worker. (*250 word maximum)*
8. *Satisfactory Understanding and Support for Professionalism in Social Work:* Student is required to review the social work department’s handbook and summarize her/his understanding and support of the policies related to the importance of demonstrating professionalism in the major. Student is then expected to identify a specific issue or policy that may be a personal challenge and then explain why that policy is important as a guide for professional development (*250 words maximum).*
9. *Satisfactory Understanding and Support for Cultural Competence:* Student is required to articulate a clear understanding of cultural competence and what the student is doing to attain cultural competence. As a part of the discussion, student must also identify a specific area or population where personal cultural competency needs improvement and then articulate a specific plan to improve cultural competency in that area (*250 word maximum).*
10. *Satisfactory Demonstration of Critical Thinking and Self-Awareness:*Student is expected to articulate how faith both informs her/his faith and presents a challenge to practicing social work. Student should articulate components of her/his faith that informs specific practice areas or issues and should discuss faith beliefs/practices that may create challenges when working with clients (for example, how might faith inform an understanding of human behavior, and in turn provide challenges when working with a specific client). Student is expected to also articulate how she/he resolves, plans to resolve, or holds in tension these issues in practice *while being competent, ethical and professional,* and must provide a minimum of two professional sources supporting her/his approach *(300 words maximum).*

## Evaluation of Application

Applications will be screened by a committee consisting of all full-time social work faculty (Department Chair and Field Coordinator) and at least one Community Advisory Committee member. Acceptance is based upon the assessment of the student’s capability to achieve academic success, the possession of a value base consistent with professional social work values and ethics, the student’s interest in and commitment to the profession of social work, the student’s commitment to integration of principles of Christian faith with social work knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive processes and affective processes, and demonstration of social work competency proporitiante to sophomore status in the major.

Students are notified via email that a decision has been made related to the status of their application to the major no later than March 1st . Students are then required to schedule a face-to-face meeting with their advisor no later than one week after receiving notice that a decision has been made. Each student will receive a compiled Application to the Major: Committee Member Worksheet outlining one of three decisions, Admission to the Major, Conditional Admission, or Non-Admission to the major during the face-to-face meeting with academic advisor. Students who are away from campus for reasons such as study abroad will be notified by email that a decision has been made and will be provided with the Committee Member Worksheet as an attachment. Specific instructions are provided to students who receive Conditional Admission or Non-Admission to the major. Students receiving Non-Admission can appeal the decision following the procedures that apply and are noted in the handbook under academic and/or professional performance issues.

## Admittance to the Social Work Major

Students who meet the following requirements will be granted admission to the social work major as outlined in the compiled Admission to the Major packet the student receives when meeting with the advisor:

*1) 2.7 (B-) GPA in the major*

*2) 2.0 Cumulative GPA*

*3) 2.3 (C+) GPA requirement for all major designated courses.*

*4) Meets ethical, professional, and competency standards and APA writing requirements outlined on the Formal Application for Admission.*

*\*If at any time a student falls below these requirements, their status will be reviewed by social work faculty and conditional status may be imposed. Students are expected to notify their advisor within two weeks if this occurs. Student infraction of the community covenant or a violation of the Social Work Code of Ethics may also prompt conditional status or removal from the major.*

## Conditional Admittance to the Social Work Major

Students not meeting all four of the requirements will be considered for conditional status if the committee determines that the areas of concern can be adequately addressed by the student and there is sufficient time for the student to develop a plan to meet program requirements. Students achieving conditional status must develop a plan in consultation with their advisor to earn admission status and will have their application reviewed at both three months and at six months (in most cases this will occur during fall advising) to evaluate change in status. Revisions to the application by the student will be submitted to the Department Chair by April 1st and the Chair will review the changes and schedule a follow up with the student by May 30th to evaluate change in status (removal of conditional to acceptance or continuance of working toward acceptance.) If the student is not removed from conditional during the follow up with the Chair, then the student and their advisor will continue to make a plan to work towards acceptance and the plan will be reviewed again at fall advising. Students on conditional status are not eligible for senior field placement (SOWK 490) except in circumstances where the student has demonstrated an ability to meet ethical, competency and professional standards and where it is likely the student can meet the standards to graduate with a social work degree. Exceptions to policy will be decided on a case-to-case basis by the Department Chair in consultation with the department.

## Non-admittance to the Social Work Major

Students not meeting all four of the requirements, who may be demonstrating behavior that is incompetent, unethical, or unprofessional, who may be demonstrating behavior that violates Department, University, agency, professional or state policy, or where it is determined that the student is unlikely to meet the standards to graduate with a social work degree, may not be admitted to the social work major and may not register for SOWK 372: Social Work Practice with Groups or SOWK 475: Social Work Practice with Communities and Organizations. Students may re-apply in the next semester. Students are not eligible to re-apply to the major more than once during their academic career.

## Additional Admittance Information

1. Any students on academic probation are not able to apply for admission until their GPA is above a 2.0. These students may not schedule any further social work classes until their GPA is above a 2.0.
2. Students who have not achieved full admission to the major (i.e. have conditional admission) must be reviewed by the Department Chair and Field Coordinator prior to registering for SOWK 484 Preparation for Field Practice. The faculty must agree to grant an exception to policy in order for the student to proceed into the senior field component of the Department.
3. The admissions committee promptly informs the student’s faculty advisor of the student’s admission status. The advisor works with students with conditional acceptance to develop a plan to achieve full admittance to the social work major by fall of the student’s senior year so that senior field placement can still be put into place. If a student was not accepted to the major, the faculty advisor helps the student review options and make other plans to change to another academic major.

# APPLICATION TO THE MAJOR: COMMITTEE MEMBER WORKSHEET

Reviewer Name:      Association with Program:

Committee members are responsible for reviewing each application to the major and completing the table below. After reading each application, assess the content areas identified below and note whether the student should be admitted to the major, conditionally admitted, or should not be admitted, based on the information provided. For each category, students should receive an admission check if the student met or exceeded expectations. Students should receive conditional admission if there are minor areas that do not meet expectations but the reviewer believes the area could be rectified in a reasonable fashion or time frame. Students should receive non-admission if there are significant issues and the reviewer believes that the area would take considerable work to see improvement. The reviewer should clearly articulate reasoning for any conditional or non-admission check. Please also note student strengths where appropriate. Each reviewer should then make a final recommendation to the department related to being admitted, conditionally admitted or denied admission. Clearly articulate reasoning for the recommendation. Once committee members review the applications assigned, a meeting will then be scheduled where committee members will discuss each student and make final recommendations. Once this process is completed each student will be notified of the status of his or her application.

Student Name:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Content Area | Admission  to the major | Conditional  Admission | Non-  Admission | Answer Question completely and/or respond to comment, using APA Format and SMART Goals Where Required |
| **1. Satisfactory Academic/ Competency Progress**  a. Satisfactory Progress in all SOWK Courses (Grade of B or higher in any completed SOWK course, a grade average of 85% or higher in any current course). Student submitted grades for all SOWK courses taken and provided a current percentage grade for SOWK courses in progress (including SOWK120, SOWK221, SOWK250, SOWK251, SOWK360, and SOWK361). |  |  |  |  |
| b. Satisfactory GPA in the Major: Student submitted GPA in the Major (2.7 GPA or higher in the Social Work Major) |  |  |  |  |
| c. Satisfactory Overall GPA: (2.5 Cumulative GPA or higher) |  |  |  |  |
| d. **Discussion of Satisfactory Academic Progress:** Student is required to provide evidence of satisfactory progress (SOWK course grades or grade average of current courses, and major and overall GPA) in the major as an introduction to the section on academic progress. Student demonstrating satisfactory progress (Grade of B or higher in any completed SOWK course, a grade average of 85% or higher in any current course, and meeting major and overall GPA expectations) will articulate a specific plan for how she/he will continue to maintain in good academic standing in the department. Student not meeting satisfactory progress is expected to address the barriers to satisfactory progress and provide a specific plan for attaining good academic standing in the major. Additionally, any student with a grade of lower than a 2.3 (C+) in any SOWK class must submit a plan for retaking the course as discussed with her or his academic advisor (**250 words maximum**). |  |  |  |  |
| **2. Satisfactory understanding and support for the Social Work Code of Ethics:** Student is required to review the *NASW Code of Ethics* and summarize her/his understanding and support for the values and ethics identified in the *Code*. Student is expected to note the reading, understanding and level of support for the *Code of Ethics* as an introduction to the section on Values and Ethics. Student is then expected to identify a specific social work value and the importance of that value in her/his development as a professional social worker. (**250 word maximum**)  a. Student reported reading and understanding of Code of Ethics |  |  |  |  |
| b. Student demonstrated understanding of connection between values and professional development |  |  |  |  |
| 3**. Satisfactory understanding and support for Professionalism in Social Work:** Student is required to review the social work department’s handbook (or a section that has been identified) and summarize her/his understanding and support of the policies related to the importance of demonstrating professionalism in the major. Student is then expected to identify a specific issue or policy that may be a personal challenge and then explain why that policy is important as a guide for professional development (250 words maximum).  a. Student reported reading and understanding Social Work Handbook (or section assigned) |  |  |  |  |
| b. Student demonstrated self-awareness and self-reflection in assessing professional development |  |  |  |  |
| **4. Satisfactory understanding and support for Cultural Competence:** Student is required to articulate a clear understanding of cultural competence and what the student is doing to attain cultural competence. As a part of the discussion, student must also identify a specific area or population where personal cultural competency needs improvement and then articulate a specific plan to improve cultural competency in that area (**250 word maximum**).  a. Student articulated a clear understanding of cultural competence and a plan to attain cultural competence. |  |  |  |  |
| b. Student identified an area needing improvement and a specific plan to improve cultural competence in that area. |  |  |  |  |
| **5. Satisfactory demonstration of Critical Thinking and Self-Awareness:** Student is expected to articulate how faith both informs her/his faith and presents a challenge to practicing social work. Student should articulate components of her/his faith that informs specific practice areas or issues and should discuss faith beliefs/practices that may create challenges when working with clients (for example, how might faith inform an understanding of human behavior, and in turn provide challenges when working with a specific client). Student is expected to also articulate how she/he resolves, plans to resolve, or holds in tension these issues in practice and must provide a minimum of two professional sources supporting her/his approach (**300 words maximum**).  a. Student demonstrated critical thinking in articulating components of faith that informs practice |  |  |  |  |
| b. Student demonstrated self-awareness when discussing faith beliefs/practices that may create challenges. |  |  |  |  |
| c. Student provided evidence of critical thinking and self-awareness when discussing how she/he resolves/ plans to resolve/ holds in tension challenges related to faith and practice. |  |  |  |  |
| ***6. In all areas requiring a plan, student included a plan that met SMART plan expectations (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely).*** |  |  |  |  |
| ***7. Student addressed paper expectations related to APA (Cover page, abstract, introduction, headings, APA, reference page, word count etc.).***  Student is expected to follow APA style and address the five areas listed above. Each of the five sections must be identified with a **heading** within the application. The application should include a **cover page**, **reference page** and an **abstract page** (student should use the application to the major checklist for the abstract page). Student is also expected to provide a brief **introduction** for the application and follow **word count expectations**. **Clarity and conciseness** are essential components of this assignment. Therefore, **first person point of view is acceptable** when appropriate, to assist with conciseness and to avoid ambiguity. |  |  |  |  |
| **Recommendation** |  |  |  |  |