



Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Handbook

“... and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?”

Micah 6:8

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Welcome Letter

Dear Students,

Welcome to the MSW Program at Messiah University! We're glad you're here. Our focus is on developing and nurturing advanced professional social workers who will serve all of God's creation with respect to age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. We adhere to the nine core social work competencies defined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) while ethically integrating faith and the social work profession. During your time in the Messiah University MSW program, you will find a supportive Christian community that will support you in your endeavors of becoming a competent, ethical, and proficient professional. Your learning will be enriched by both full and part time faculty members who bring a wealth of on-ground experiences in a wide variety of social work settings working with diverse populations across the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. Although the MSW program is online, it is designed to maximize opportunities for interaction between students in and out of the classroom and between students and faculty for the purposes of advising, mentoring, and professional growth and development. Please use this Handbook as a guide throughout your time in the program, and don't hesitate to ask questions. We'll be cheering you on the whole time, and we'll celebrate with you as you walk across the stage on graduation day!

Social Work Full-Time Faculty

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Position: Director of the Master of Social Work Program,
Professor of Social Work

Education: PhD, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, OH
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The integration of faith and social work practice
Community-building

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Program Staff

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Mission, Goals, and Philosophy

Brief Description

The MSW Program at Messiah University is a fully online program with a mix of asynchronous and synchronous instruction. It offers a specialization in Advanced Generalist Practice with elective options for focused interprofessional preparation in mental health, healthcare, or leadership in organizations.

Messiah University Mission Statement

Messiah University is a Christian University of the liberal arts and applied arts and sciences, committed to embracing an evangelical spirit rooted in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions of the Christian church. The mission of Messiah University is to educate men and women toward maturity of intellect, character, and Christian faith in preparation for lives of service, leadership, and reconciliation in church and society.

Mission of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies

Messiah University's School of Graduate and Professional Studies educates students for a lifetime of intellectual exploration, ethical leadership, and exceptional professional practice within a complex world.

MSW Program Mission Statement

The mission of the MSW program at Messiah University is to prepare competent and ethical advanced social work practitioners for lives of service and leadership in the context of Christian faith and with a commitment to social, racial, economic, and environmental justice and reconciliation.

MSW Program Goals

1. To prepare graduate-level practitioners to collaboratively serve and lead in areas of need, both locally and globally, for the promotion of social, racial, economic, and environmental justice and reconciliation.
2. To support and encourage the ethical integration of faith and social work practice.
3. To provide accessible social work education using innovative, effective, and personal distance technology and strategies.
4. To prepare graduate-level social workers for professional licensure and for doctoral-level academic engagement as appropriate.

Inclusive Excellence Statement

The MSW program desires to provide a safe, welcoming, and inclusive learning environment for students of any race, ethnicity, sexual/affectual orientation, gender, age, faith/spirituality/religion, economic class, or ability status. As such, students are encouraged and challenged to engage the program curriculum, the faculty/staff, and fellow students in ways that are respectful, inclusive, representative, and culturally responsive.

Integration of Faith and Practice Goal

A unique characteristic of the MSW program is the goal of integrating faith with competent, ethical, and professional social work practice. We understand that for many, faith plays a significant role in one's orientation to service, leadership, and justice. We also acknowledge the ways in which faith can provide resources for self-care.

Social Work Program Core Competencies, CSWE Accreditation, and Assessment

Program Generalist Competencies and Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical

social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

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

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

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

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

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

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

privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

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

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

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

Social workers:

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

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

Social workers:

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

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

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

Social workers:

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

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

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

Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

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

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply

this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

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

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

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

Social workers:

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

Competency 10: Apply Christian Faith Principles to Inform and Guide Competent, Professional, and Ethical Practice

Social work graduates from Messiah University understand the ways in which Christian principles are compatible with the social work profession, including the values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, integrity, the importance of human relationships, and competence. They also understand the ways in which some Christian beliefs may be in tension with those of the profession and are able to recognize and manage personal values and make the distinction between personal and professional values when engaged in practice. Social work graduates from Messiah University develop a vocational understanding and commitment to social work and utilize aspects of their own faith tradition to assist in self-care.

Social work graduates from Messiah University:

- a. critically reflect on their personal values by assessing compatibility and tensions with the social work profession while managing personal values in a way that allows for ethical and competent practice; and
- b. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Program Specialization Competencies and Behaviors: Advanced Generalist

The Advanced Generalist specialization extends and enhances generalist practice by preparing graduates for *integrated practice that emphasizes a multi-dimensional and complex view of the social work helping process while promoting leadership, autonomy, and innovative problem-solving*; although the Advanced Generalist competency descriptions and corresponding behaviors hearken back to the generalist practice competencies, each contains specific knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive/affective processes that are necessary for advanced generalist practice.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Advanced generalist social work practitioners engage in values-driven work that leads to change at all levels of practice. As reflective practitioners, advanced generalist social workers can deal with the ambiguity inherent in complex ethical decision-making. Advanced generalist social work practitioners continually reflect on how their personal values, including those values that are shaped by a Christian (or other) faith worldview, influence professional judgment and behavior. As leaders, advanced generalist social workers provide effective supervision and consultation to other practitioners. Advanced generalist social workers intentionally plan for self-care and engage in lifelong learning through professional networking. Advanced generalist social workers provide leadership in the shaping of institutions and social work through promoting rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive practice lenses. Advanced generalist social work practitioners promote the social work perspective and work collaboratively for the best client outcomes through interprofessional and integrated practice. Advanced generalist social workers leverage the ethical use of digital technology to enhance the purposes of the profession.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- model and advocate for social work values and ethics in complex situations and institutions.
- demonstrate active engagement and independence in supervision, utilizing supervision feedback to adjust practice approaches.
- utilize interprofessional practice and related concepts in complex situations to improve client outcomes.
- develop an effective and adaptable plan for self-care to increase practice competence and decrease burnout.
- apply Christian faith principles to inform and guide competent, professional, and ethical practice.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners understand and articulate the importance of social justice as a ‘best practice’ for social work, promoting and advocating for justice-seeking interventions across all the dimensions of change. Advanced generalist social workers bring to light the human rights violations in the lives of clients at all levels of practice while using a human rights framework that asserts a standard of living that promotes human dignity and optimal well-being. As leaders, advanced generalist social workers challenge the structures of power and privilege that perpetuate oppression and work to advance human rights and foster social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, creating greater access to

resources by groups and individuals who experience barriers to access. This may involve engagement in political advocacy at the local, state, federal, and global levels. Advanced generalist social work practitioners understand how their Christian (or other) faith perspective views human rights, dignity and respect, justice, and reconciliation and how those perspectives inform professional practice.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- utilize an anti-racist and anti-oppressive approach to promote human rights and equitable access to resources and services particularly for those who experience inequity.
- design and implement practices to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice across system levels.
- apply Christian faith principles to inform and guide the advancement of human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

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

As reflective practitioners, advanced generalist social workers acknowledge the harmful impacts of racism and oppression on the experiences of clients and constituencies at all levels of practice, including research and policy. Advanced generalist practitioners acknowledge the ways in which the profession itself has contributed to racial injustice and how the impacts of racism and oppression may contribute to a distrustful or hesitant perspective from clients who engage in social work services. Using a framework for anti-racist practice that decenters whiteness, acknowledges power and privilege, and encourages cultural humility grounded in self-reflection, advanced generalist social workers take both personal and professional actions to promote policies, practices, and procedures that advance racial equality. Advanced generalist practitioners demonstrate the use of best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion, understanding that diversity as intersectional, and applying ADEI principles to direct practice with individuals, families, and groups, to practice in organizations and communities, in policy practice and in research. Advanced generalist social workers consider Christian (or other) faith principles that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and how those principles may inform their professional practice.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- engage in both personal and professional actions that advance racial equality.
- demonstrate the use of best practices in diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of practice.
- embrace and promote cultural humility as a ‘best practice’ approach in social work that encourages self-exploration, self-critique, and a willingness to learn from others.
- apply Christian faith principles to inform and guide ADEI practices.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners consistently apply the concepts of research methodologies, particularly the critical evaluation of current and empirically sound research, to utilize appropriate evidence-based practices with clients and client systems across all practice levels while balancing the

need for innovation, flexibility, and imaginative creativity in certain long-standing and challenging issues. Advanced generalist practitioners understand that evidence comes from multi-disciplinary sources and through multiple ways of knowing, including both quantitative and qualitative. Advanced generalist social workers confidently present research findings in ways that are accessible and usable to various clients and constituencies and find ways to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- critically evaluate research for its empirical soundness, inherent biases, and ethical and cultural considerations.
- integrate and differentially apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs.
- participate in the generation of new social work knowledge and applications derived from practice or research.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Advanced generalist social work practitioners understand and articulate that policy, whether at the global, federal, state, or local level, mediates social work practice, the availability of and access to services, and service delivery. Advanced generalist practitioners, using a multidimensional and complex view of the social work helping process, integrate policy concerns with practice assessments and interventions. Advanced generalist practitioners understand their leadership role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings and actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. They use their knowledge about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation to effect change that promotes human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. Advanced generalist practitioners provide leadership and support of others in advocating for policies advantageous to the practice context.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- are informed about the specific policies that mediate practice, the delivery of services, and access to services within the context of the practice setting and the populations served.
- seamlessly integrate policy analysis and evaluation as part of direct and macro practice multidimensional assessment and intervention identification.
- collaborate with clients, colleagues, and stakeholders to advocate for policies that are just and equitable.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners understand the significance of engagement in the social work change process. This emphasis on building relationships, rapport, trust, empathy, and genuineness will guide the social work change process. Advanced generalist social workers also recognize and anticipate potential challenges to engagement based on the specific practice context or focus population and application of the stages of change theory. They utilize evidence-based strategies to mitigate those

challenges. Advanced generalist practitioners synthesize their knowledge of theories of human behavior, the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, differential engagement skills, and interprofessional collaboration concepts when engaging individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. As reflective practitioners, advanced generalist social workers demonstrate an elevated level of self-awareness that can help mitigate bias, power, and privilege in the engagement of diverse clients and constituencies.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- use advanced, differential, and culturally responsive interpersonal skills that include empathy, reflection, active listening, and constructive dialogue with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and in interprofessional collaboration.
- model effective engagement strategies that reflect the specific practice context to build productive and collaborative rapport with client systems.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners understand the importance of conducting thorough, multi-dimensional, and client-centered assessment processes. They collaboratively assess individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities using a multi-level, person-in-environment, and strengths-based approach to locate the focus of change efforts and strategize in selecting from among various alternatives. Advanced generalist social workers apply and demonstrate the use of appropriate human behavior theories, as well as relevant policy, environmental, and structural issues in the bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual assessment of personal and social change potential. They engage in interprofessional collaboration and utilize methods of assessment appropriate to the specific practice context or population focus. As reflective practitioners, advanced generalist social workers demonstrate an elevated level of self-awareness that can help mitigate bias, power, and privilege in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies. Creativity is applied to address complex issues.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- identify, evaluate, select, and modify (as appropriate) assessment methods, approaches, and tools with consideration of the strengths, needs, backgrounds, and diverse social characteristics of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- collect and critically synthesize assessment information from multiple sources including theory, research, and practice experience combined with client-specific information that leads to collaborative and mutually agreed-on interventions.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners use intervention approaches that are differential, from varied sources, and culturally responsive. Advanced generalist practitioners identify, critically analyze, adapt as appropriate, and use multiple evidence-based interventions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to prevent problems, expand opportunities, and enhance quality of life.

Advanced generalist social workers actively participate in interprofessional collaboration, recognizing the role of interprofessional collaboration in improved outcomes for clients. Advanced generalist social work practitioners facilitate effective transitions and endings so clients and constituents can feel empowered to continue the work.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- critically assess and apply appropriate evidence-based intervention strategies in response to the unique strengths and needs of the specific practice context or population focus based on a multidimensional and culturally responsive assessment across all levels of practice.
- identify and focus interventions in a way that fosters innovative problem solving for complex situations.
- engage in interprofessional collaboration with the ability to provide the social work perspective when designing interventions with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

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

Advanced generalist social work practitioners recognize the importance of the evaluation process in social work practice and can apply foundational knowledge of research to program and practice evaluation. As leaders, advanced generalist social workers consistently evaluate their own practice and encourage others to do so as well. Advanced generalist practitioners use various methods for evaluating both processes and outcomes as appropriate to the specific practice context or population focus with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Selected evaluation methods are anti-racist, anti-oppressive, and incorporate client input and interprofessional collaboration as appropriate. Advanced generalist social work practitioners critically consider their evaluation findings and use them to improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Advanced generalist social workers:

- select and use culturally responsive and differential methods for evaluation of outcomes across all levels of practice.
- ethically and responsibly utilize technology to collect and manage evaluation data.
- analyze and synthesize evaluation data and provide leadership in the application of findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Accreditation

In the spring of 2025, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) granted candidacy status to the MSW program at Messiah. Graduates of the MSW program at Messiah University will receive retroactive accreditation status once the program has been granted initial accreditation and will be eligible for professional social work licensure in most states. This is a three-year process, and it is not guaranteed. Please review and understand your specific state's education requirements.

Program Assessment

The MSW program regularly engages in formal and informal evaluations to assess students' progress toward program goals, related competencies, and behaviors. Informal evaluation consists of feedback solicited by faculty as students are advised and engaged in informal meetings. This allows faculty and students the forum to discuss the integration of Christian faith into practice and allows for observation of students' professional and personal growth. Students are regularly given the opportunity to informally meet with faculty through a virtual open-door policy, which enables students to schedule appointments with faculty as needed.

Formal evaluation of student progress toward program goals and objectives, competencies, and related behaviors is ongoing and occurs at regular intervals. Data on student progress is collected through student performance on class assignments, practicum evaluations, graduating student exit interviews, and alumni surveys. Data collected is used to evaluate program effectiveness in developing competent advanced social work practitioners. The information is also used to identify areas of program strengths and areas where improvements can be made.

Curriculum

Curriculum Overview

The MSW curriculum is designed to reflect the educational goals and objectives of the program and uses a sequential model. Students must successfully complete all required courses to graduate. Further information on the curriculum, including course descriptions, may be found in the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Courses - (61 credits)

- SOWK505 Professional Seminar I (1)
- SOWK510 Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)
- SOWK515 Diversity and Social Justice (3)
- SOWK540 Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals (3)
- SOWK545 Generalist Social Work Practice with Families (3)
- SOWK550 Generalist Social Work Practice with Groups (3)
- SOWK555 Generalist Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities (3)
- IPEC580 Research Methods (3)
- SOWK520 Social Welfare Policy and Change (3)
- SOWK560 Field Instruction and Seminar I (3)
- SOWK565 Field Instruction and Seminar II (3)
- SOWK605 Professional Seminar II (1)
- SOWK620 Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (3)
- SOWK625 Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice with Groups (3)
- SOWK630 Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice with Organizations & Communities (3)
- SOWK635 Advanced Social Work Research Methods (3)
- SOWK650 Field Instruction and Seminar III (3)
- SOWK655 Field Instruction and Seminar IV (3)

SOWK680 Professional Seminar III (2)

Nine (9) credits of interdisciplinary focus area courses in mental health, healthcare, or leadership in organizations.

*Students who enter the program as Advanced Standing take the last 30 credits of the MSW program curriculum.

Examples of the different program completion plan/course sequencing options can be found as *Attachment B* at the end of this document.

Graduation Requirements

Graduation from the MSW Program requires:

- An overall minimum GPA of 3.0
- Successful completion of all coursework
- Successful completion of the practicum experience(s)
- Successful completion of any personal remediation plan(s), and the recommendation of Remediation Committee and/or the MSW Program
- Completion of a capstone project
- Compliance with all other Messiah University policies for graduation

Program Completion

Traditional admission students may complete the MSW program in 2-4 years, and Advanced Standing admission students may complete the MSW program in 1-2 years, but all students must complete their degree within six years from the time they began the program. Students are expected to be continuously enrolled from the time they begin their program.

Program Expectations

The Field Practicum as Signature Pedagogy, Field Practicum Handbook, and Field Practicum Management

The Field Practicum is an important component of the MSW Program curriculum and is described as the ‘signature pedagogy’ for social work education. It is an opportunity for MSW students to demonstrate social work knowledge, values, and skills in a social service setting under the supervision of an experienced social work practitioner. Each MSW student should have knowledge of and conform to applicable field practicum policies found in the MSW Program Field Practicum Handbook prior to entering field experience courses. The Field Practicum Handbook is available through the MSW Field Education Office. Each MSW student will obtain access to a field placement management system, which houses all practicum forms and manages professional development experiences. The MSW Field Office provides specific orientation to the Field Practicum for all eligible students.

Graduate School Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

MSW students are expected to understand and adhere to the Messiah University Graduate Student Code of Conduct. Information regarding those expectations is found in the Graduate Catalog. This includes expectations for academic integrity, such as prohibitions against cheating, plagiarism, or other

forms of academic dishonesty. A full description of what is meant by academic integrity and how situations that do not uphold these descriptions are handled within the School of Graduate and Professional Studies are also found in the Graduate Catalog.

Messiah University is responsible to clearly articulate the Academic Integrity Policy to students by publishing it in the graduate student catalog and providing links in student handbooks. Faculty should reference the policy in their course syllabi. However, primary responsibility for knowledge of and compliance with this policy rests with the student.

Professional Behavior

Students in the MSW program must know and abide by the professional and ethical standards that govern social work practice. The National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics is introduced early in the program, and the CSWE Competency One clearly describes the expectations for professional and ethical behavior. It is expected that MSW students demonstrate ethical and professional behaviors in both Program contexts and in Field Practicum contexts.

Social Media

If students identify themselves as a Messiah University student online, it should be clear that any views expressed are not necessarily those of the institution. If opposing views arise on a social media feed, exercise professional judgment. Messiah University does not tolerate content from students that is defamatory, harassing, libelous or inhospitable to a reasonable academic/work environment. Social media may be used to investigate student behavior. This policy provides Messiah University Master of Social Work students with rules for participation in social media.

Therefore, it is the students' responsibility to refrain from any of the following:

1. Using clients' name (any identifier including initials, agency name, etc.) and personal information in any way.
2. Disclosing confidential information about the University, its employees, or its students.
3. Stating personal opinions as being endorsed by the University.
4. Using information and conducting activities that may violate Messiah University academic or handbook policies, or may violate local, state, or federal laws, and regulations.

Writing

It is expected that writing assignments are written to reflect university standards for organization, grammar, syntax, and mechanics. All papers must be typed, double spaced, and conform to the format of the American Psychological Association (APA) for margins, citations, and references. Students are required to purchase and refer to the most current *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* for a complete explanation and guide to all types of documentation.

Hardware and Software Recommendations:

Student technology recommendations are found on the Information Technology Services website. These guidelines have been put in place to best equip you to have an optimal technological experience in our online programs. Students must possess basic computer skills and have regular access to a computer with the Minimum System Requirements to participate fully in the course.

Professional Development

Professional conferences and workshops that are held during the year provide a forum for students to network and become engaged in the profession of social work and with various professional organizations. Social work faculty provide information about upcoming conferences and coordinate student attendance at such events to encourage professional development and lifelong learning. Students are responsible for all transportation to and from the conferences and lodging while at the conference. Students are encouraged to volunteer at conferences to reduce fees. In addition, students should consider membership in professional organizations while they are able to join at reduced membership rates. These include the National Association of Social Workers and the North American Association of Christians in Social Work.

Policies and Procedures

Social Work Policy Overview

A component of being a professional is knowing, understanding, and following organizational policies and procedures. MSW students must follow all Messiah University policies and procedures outlined for graduate students and follow all policy and procedures outlined in course syllabi. Additionally, students are expected to review and follow the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles of the International Federation of Social Workers, and the policies and procedures noted in the Messiah University Master of Social Work Program Student Handbook.

Policy and Procedure for Admission to the MSW Program

All policies and procedures related to admission into the MSW Program, including admittance criteria and admission decision types can be found on the Graduate Admissions webpage under the Social Work (MSW) tab.

Process for the Evaluation of Applications

Applicants interested in applying to the MSW program can find a link to the application and the admissions requirements for the program on the graduate admissions requirements webpage and the MSW program webpage. The information on these pages helps an applicant access the electronic application managed in Messiah's Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Slate, and the admissions requirements. The application in Slate is designed to guide students through submitting the application and the admissions requirements listed on the web pages listed above.

Applicants who begin an application or submit an application are contacted by the graduate enrollment counselor working with the MSW program. The enrollment counselor's role is to aid any interested applicants in understanding the admissions process. The enrollment counselor communicates with applicants regularly to assist with the submission of all necessary admission requirements and answer questions about the program. In general, applicants are asked to submit all admission requirements (application materials) before their application file is reviewed. Once the application file is complete, the graduate enrollment counselor reviews all submitted application materials and notifies the admissions

specialist that a particular applicant is ready for processing. Processing includes entering an applicant's data into Messiah's main database, Banner, and communication with the MSW program. Applicants are assigned a Banner ID and an email is sent to MSW program director indicating an applicant's admissions file is ready for review. At the same time, the enrollment counselor sends an interview invitation to qualified applicants. After receiving a completed application, the application review and interview would ideally happen within a two-week period. The interview is the last step of the application process. Interviews are completed via Zoom with two MSW program faculty who read all the application materials before the interview.

Enrollment decisions are made by the program faculty immediately following the interview and decisions are communicated with the enrollment counselor who updates the applicant's application file in Slate. Within one week of the interview, applicants will receive a decision notification via email alerting applicants to check their admissions portal (in Slate) to view the decision letter.

Once an admissions decision is made and updated in their applicant file, applicants will receive an email indicating that there has been an update to their admissions portal (Slate). The applicant will be prompted to log in to the admissions portal to view the decision letter which is available for viewing by the applicant. For provisional or conditional acceptance, the parameters of those acceptances are clearly articulated in the official letter. The notification process is the same for each of the four decision types.

Policy Related to the Awarding of Advanced Standing and Achievement of Generalist Content at the Baccalaureate Level

The MSW program at Messiah University awards advanced standing status only to those candidates with either a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work degree, or a CASWE-accredited baccalaureate social work degree (from the Canadian social work accreditor, recognized through an MOU with CSWE and CASWE, or an internationally earned ISWDRES-evaluated degree comparable to a baccalaureate degree in social work.)

Advanced standing is awarded by waiving the generalist curriculum requirements and beginning the specialized curriculum immediately upon admission/enrollment. There is no conditional acceptance for Advanced Standing.

Granting advanced standing status is the main process/mechanism used by the MSW program for ensuring CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work graduates do not repeat generalist content achievements. When applicants do not qualify for advanced standing status, the program implements a secondary process/mechanism for ensuring CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work graduates do not repeat generalist content achievements.

- Transcripts are reviewed closely by the MSW Program Director.
- Individual equivalent social work courses taken in the generalist practice curriculum can be waived if the grade earned in the course was a B or better.
- The MSW Program Director may request that the student submit course descriptions and/or syllabi for the courses considered for waiver to assure equivalency.

Policy Related to Academic and Professional Advising

Academic and professional advising is provided to MSW students by full-time program faculty. Once a student is admitted into the program, they are assigned an advisor by the MSW Program Director based on availability of advisors. The academic and professional advisor works with the student to select the most appropriate program completion plan, to schedule courses to stay on track with the lock-step nature

of the program, and to consult with the student on any questions or concerns related to the profession and the student's professional trajectory. Though advisors are available to consult with students about their schedule, *it is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure the correct courses have been completed to achieve progression into the specialization year and on to graduation.*

A student may request a change of advisor by sending an email to the MSW Program Director who will consider a change based on the request rationale. Outside of the formal advisor assignment, MSW students can seek professional, informal advising from other social work program faculty or staff as those relationships are developed.

Policy Related to Not Offering Course Credit for Life or Work Experience

The MSW program at Messiah University does not grant social work course credit for life experience or for previous work experience. This is a requirement for maintaining compliance with CSWE accreditation standards.

Transfer of Course Policy

The MSW Program follows the policy for the transfer of courses that is established by the School of Graduate and Professional Studies with some details that are specific to the MSW Program. Transfer credit is credit earned for coursework completed at another institution and applied to meet requirements at Messiah University. Students may transfer graduate coursework from other institutions under the following conditions:

- The coursework must have been completed at a regionally accredited institution. *For social work practice courses and field courses, the coursework must have been completed in a CSWE-accredited or candidacy program.*
- The credits are graduate level.
- A minimum grade of a "B" was earned for each transferred course.
- The courses must be completed within the last seven (7) years of matriculation into the degree or certificate program. Some programs may have stricter requirements for transfer credits.
- Currently enrolled students who wish to take credits at another institution and transfer them to Messiah University must have written approval of the Program Director prior to starting coursework.
- The credits are not among those that must be taken at Messiah University. *(For the MSW Program, Professional Seminar I, Professional Seminar II, Professional Seminar III, Field Instruction and Seminar III, and Field Instruction Seminar IV must be taken at Messiah).*
- The number of credits transferred does not exceed the maximum allowed in the student's program. *(For the MSW Program, no more than 18 credits can be transferred; no more than 6 credits for Advanced Standing).*
- Only credits and courses are eligible for transfer. Grades earned at the original institution are not calculated into the student's Messiah University grade point average.
- Transfer credits are not eligible to meet requirements for 9-credit graduate certificates. A maximum of three (3) credits may be transferred to meet requirements for graduate certificates requiring more than 9 credits.

Procedure to transfer credits:

- When a student applies, they request the former college to send an official transcript of work to the School of Graduate and Professional Studies (SGPS) Enrollment Office (as part of the application process).
- The SGPS Office provides copies of the transcripts to the Program Director.
- The Program Director notifies the student and Registrar via email how the credits will transfer, and the Registrar's Office updates the student's record accordingly.

The Program Director has the final authority on all transfer credit decisions. Transferred credits become part of the student's program of study and it is the student's responsibility to work with his/her advisor to carefully schedule remaining coursework.

Standards Of Academic Standing Including Probation and Dismissal

The MSW Program adopts the policies and procedures of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies regarding academic standing, probation, and dismissal. These academic standards apply to all degree and non-degree seeking graduate students and are found in the Graduate Catalog. It is important to note that graduate students, including MSW students, must maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.00 (as calculated at the end of a semester) to remain in good academic standing.

Grade Dispute Procedures

The MSW Program adopts the grade dispute policy and procedures of the School of Graduate and Professional studies as outlined in the Catalog. This refers to a final grade given in a particular course.

Standards of Professional Behavior Policies Specific to the MSW Program

All MSW students are expected to demonstrate high standards of ethical and professional behavior in all educational and field instruction settings including, but not limited to:

- Classroom-based milieu (e.g., online, and technology-based classes).
- Professional and field instruction sites that are part of the learning program.
- Other settings not part of the formal learning program but contribute to the learning process (e.g., student-run special interest group meetings and activities, clubs and governance structures, interactions with social work and non-social work professional Program administrators, faculty and staff of the University, or any other member of the campus community); and other off-campus settings.
- This Policy is intended to guide the ethical and professional behavior of students studying in the program. It is not intended for the MSW Program to directly guide or address behavior that is a part of a student's private life, but such behavior may come to the attention of Messiah University in several ways and become the focus of a policy inquiry.
- Conduct may be reported to a member of the faculty or administration from a variety of sources that raises concern about the student's capacity to continue his or her studies. If such reported conduct raises a concern about the safety of the student or the safety of others that the student may have contact with at the institution or includes behavior that could indicate an issue with judgment or moral, ethical, or personal values that would preclude satisfactory functioning in the

social work profession, an inquiry may be conducted, and action taken on the basis of the information gathered.

- If a student is charged with an offense in the civil justice system and the University becomes aware of and verifies this circumstance through self-report of the student or a reliable, verified source, the University, in its sole discretion, will promptly pursue an investigation and institute commensurate academic and/or student judicial disciplinary action; not limited to any final adjudication of the civil court proceeding. The University will complete this due process regardless of whether the student withdraws from the program, the University and/or fails to participate in the process.
- If a student is charged with a criminal offense, they are obligated to report this to the Program Director immediately. If a matriculating student has been charged with a criminal offense between the time they submitted an application and the time they arrive at school, or at any time while a student at Messiah University, they must inform the Program Director of the charges before the first day of classes. If the University later discovers that a student withheld disclosure of a criminal charge, they may be subject to immediate program dismissal. The University, in its sole discretion, will promptly pursue an investigation and institute commensurate academic and/or student judicial disciplinary action simultaneous with or in advance of any final adjudication of the criminal court proceeding. The University will complete this due process regardless of whether the student withdraws from the program, the University and/or fails to participate in the process. This is consistent with the obligation of the University and its professional programs to ensure the safety of clients and others.
- MSW students are expected to always hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct. As part of their education and training, students must begin to practice behavior that they will uphold for the rest of their professional lives.

Student Professional Performance Standards

In conjunction with our mission and philosophy to provide quality professional education and to ensure that our graduates can function in a broad variety of professional situations, the MSW Program evaluates the functional abilities and performance of all students. Certain functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective social work practice. Therefore, the faculty has determined that the following professional standards and technical skills are requisite for competent social work practice. Students must certify that they understand and are able to meet and maintain these standards with or without reasonable accommodation, aides and/or services related to a disability. A student unable to perform these professional standards may be subject to a hearing to review whether the student may continue to matriculate in the MSW program. Any student who is concerned about their ability to meet any of the professional standards described herein should contact the Program Director as soon as possible and at any time during the matriculation process.

Physical Performance

- Exhibit physical capacity to attend and actively engage in online classes and in-person practicum placement including motor and sensory skills to meet the requirements of the course with or without assistive devices.

Cognitive Performance

- Demonstrate accurate knowledge of the field of social work as a profession.
- Demonstrate clarity of thinking to process information and appropriately apply it to situations in classroom and field settings.
- Demonstrate grounding in the relevant disciplines of social, behavioral, and biological sciences, which include knowledge and skills in effective relationship building.
- Exhibit the ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and appropriately apply that knowledge to professional practice.

Emotional Maturity and Mental Health Performance

- Use sound judgment. Seek and effectively use help for medical and emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Provide evidence that appropriate counseling or help with personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse or mental health difficulties has been obtained. No student will be allowed to continue if personal situations:
 - compromise scholastic and/or other performance,
 - interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
 - jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the student has a professional responsibility.
- Deal with emotional stress of one's own by exercising effective self-care or stress management strategy and prioritizing responsibilities.
- Demonstrate ability to assess own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice
- Exhibit knowledge of how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and past experiences affect thinking, behavior, and relationships.
- Use self-disclosure appropriately.

Communication Performance

- Use oral and written skills to communicate in ways that are respectful, safe, and protect the privacy of students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals.

Written communication skills:

- Write clearly, professionally, and use correct grammar and spelling in all communication to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by faculty and field Instructors.
- Apply appropriate writing style, including current American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation.
- Demonstrate sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to adequately complete all written assignments, as specified by faculty or field supervisors.

Oral communication skills:

- Communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals.
- Express ideas and feelings clearly.
- Communicate in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to adequately complete all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty or field supervisors.
- Exhibit willingness and an ability to listen to others.

Interpersonal, Ethical and Behavioral Performance

- Establish and develop constructive relationships with those involved in one's learning process with but not limited to clients, field instructors, or faculty members.
- Demonstrate interpersonal skills to relate effectively to others including empathy & positive attitude.
- Conduct oneself in a way that characterizes honesty, integrity, compassion, humility, and patience.
- Demonstrate respect for and consideration of others, including those different from oneself
- Maintain professional boundaries.
- Demonstrate responsible and accountable behavior evidenced, for example, by:
 - Knowing and practicing within the scope of social work.
 - Adhering to course attendance expectations.
 - Being punctual and dependable.
 - Completing all course readings and assignments in preparation for weekly learning.
 - Actively engaging in class discussions and activities.
 - Completing all assignments on time and to university level standards.
 - Keeping appointments or making timely appropriate alternative arrangements.
 - Using sound judgment to enact prudently upon encountered situations.
 - Be adaptable to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many clients.
 - Comply with program policies, agency policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classrooms, fields, and communities.
 - Work effectively with others, regardless of the level of authority.
 - Make an appropriate effort toward self-improvement.
 - Be receptive to feedback and supervision in a constructive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development/performance.
 - Take appropriate responsibility for your own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others.
 - Demonstrate ethical behavior, including a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Codes of Ethics for Social Work Board of Examiners in relevant jurisdictions.

Ethical behaviors include:

- Maintaining and safeguarding the confidentiality of client information, records, and communications
- No history of charges and/or convictions of an offense that is contrary to professional practice.
- Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, gender, class, race, religion, sexuality, and/or cultural values on clients.
- Demonstration of honesty and integrity by being truthful about background, experiences, and qualifications; doing one's own work; and giving credit for the ideas of others.
- Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

- Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
- Committing to the essential values of social work that include the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).
- Reflecting a professional manner in appearance, dress, and demeanor in all academic and professional settings.

Professional Performance Review Policy and Procedures for Remediation

In preparing students for professional practice, the MSW faculty takes responsibility for promoting the standards of the social work profession by continuously monitoring student academic and professional performance and addressing concerns with the student through advising and grading. In addition to academic performance, students are required to demonstrate professional performance skills necessary for work with clients and in professional practice. To help assess the academic and professional performance standards described above, course instructors will discuss any student concerns with the Program Director at the end of each course. For the Field Practicum courses, students will be primarily evaluated through the Field Evaluation form, but Field Instructors and Field Liaisons may also discuss any student concerns with the Program Director ahead of completion of the Field Evaluation form.

After reviewing any student performance feedback, MSW Program faculty, in conjunction with the student, will develop, if indicated, a remediation plan for students who are not achieving at the expected level. The goal of the remediation plan will be to help the student work toward meeting the stated goals of the program. Remediation plans will be included in student files and will be reviewed with the student through Zoom or another virtual meeting platform. Remediation plans could include utilization of the Writing Center at Messiah University; having papers reviewed before submission; completing particular assignments a second time to ensure adequate level of competence; retaking a course; reducing the number of courses taken at one time; taking a break from the Program; checking in periodically with their advisor; additional assignments; delay of field experiences; or other requirements as determined by the MSW Program. *If the student does not successfully complete the remediation plan outlined by the Program, the Department reserves the right to remove the student from the MSW Program.*

Information disclosed during student meetings with faculty, Program Director, or School of Graduate and Professional Studies administrators *will not be kept confidential* if the information raises concerns about academic and professional performance. Faculty and/or the Program Director will share pertinent information with each other for the professional purpose of identifying student issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns.

Policy and Procedure for Professional Performance Leading to Probation or Dismissal

While remediation is always the first choice in addressing concerns related to professional performance, there may be serious situations in which probation or dismissal from the MSW Program is the appropriate first response. In the event a student displays behavior that indicates either professional incompetence or ethical misbehavior, the following procedures are used:

- The field instructor, classroom instructor, advisor, or other person bringing the concern is to submit a written statement to the Program Director explaining the nature of the concern and the

evidence for it. The Program Director will provide notification to the student that a concern has been submitted and that a meeting will be convened to discuss it. A copy of the written concern will be provided to the student.

- Within 10 (ten) days of receiving the written concern, the Program Director will convene a virtual meeting of the principals involved to discuss the concern and to gather information. The student may submit a written response to the Program Director. The Program Director will decide as to whether the facts of the situation support the concern and warrant further action.
- Within five (5) working days of the above meeting, the Program Director will provide the student and the party submitting the concern a written response indicating whether there is a basis or not for proceeding with the complaint.
- Within ten (10) days, the Program Director will decide whether to appoint a Social Work Professional Review committee to consider the matter. If appointed, the sole purpose of the committee will be to gather information and to provide advice to the Program Director about the matter. The committee will be composed of the following personnel to be appointed by the Program Director: a faculty chairperson, two faculty members from the MSW Program, and a student representative chosen by the student against whom the concern was filed. The committee will meet with the principals to gather evidence and consider the matter. This meeting will occur within ten (10) days of the committee's appointment. The committee will make a recommendation to the Program Director regarding the validity of the concern and what sanctions, if any, are to be applied. The sanctions can include, but are not limited to, a warning to the student, placement on probation status with terms of the probation specified in writing, or dismissal from the Program.
- Within ten (10) days of receiving the recommendation from the Social Work Professional Review Committee, the Program Director will review the recommendations of the committee and communicate in writing to the student the outcome of the process. A copy of the written outcome will be sent to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.
- All appeals are to be reported to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Professional Performance Appeals of Outcomes

The MSW Program adopts the *Notice And Appeal Of Outcome From Remediation And Development Plans* policy of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, which can be found in the Graduate Catalog. This policy states that “All remediation plans, development plans, or similar corrective measures, will be managed by the Program in which the student is enrolled. However, if a student takes issue with the outcome of the plan, he/she may appeal the decision of the Program within the time limit stated in the Program's final decision letter by filing a written petition with the Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies stating the reason for appeal.

The student must also send a copy of his/her appeal to the Program Director of the program that provided the decision being appealed. Appeals are reviewed by the Graduate Council or an appointed sub-committee from within the Graduate Council. The Program Director who was part of the decision being appealed will recuse him/herself from deliberations of the appeal. The decision of the Graduate Council (or its appointed sub-committee) is final. The Dean of the School of Graduate & Professional Studies will notify the student in writing of the appeal decision and will provide a copy of the communication to the Program Director.”

Readmission after Remediation or Development Plan Dismissal

The MSW Program adopts the readmission after dismissal policy of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, which can be found in the Graduate Catalog. This policy states that “Students who are dismissed as an outcome of a remediation plan, development plan or similar corrective measure, may not apply for readmission to Messiah University for at least two academic years from the date of the dismissal. During the two-year dismissal, students may not enroll in graduate level courses at Messiah University. In addition, students may not apply for admission to a different graduate level program at Messiah University during the two-year dismissal. When petitioning for readmission, the student must evidence fundamental change that will demonstrate a strong likelihood that he/she possesses the motivation and capacity to successfully complete the requirements of the chosen masters-level program. Readmission is neither automatic nor guaranteed. The Program Director will notify the student in writing about the school’s decision for readmission. Students who are readmitted must comply with all the terms set forth in the reinstatement letter.”

See Attachment A for a copy of the Student Acknowledgement Form.

Opportunities for MSW Student Input and Participation

Community Advisory Board (CAB)

Mission of the Community Advisory Board

To promote a reciprocal and ongoing relationship between Messiah BSW and MSW Programs and members of the practice community as part of the process of continuous evaluation of educational goals and objectives, curriculum, and field practice in order to enhance the quality of baccalaureate and master social work education and practice at Messiah University.

Community Advisory Board Role and Expectations

1. *Role of Community Advisory Board:* The Community Advisory Board will function as an advisory body to the Messiah University BSW & MSW Programs. The Board would not possess any form of authority or legal responsibility related to the Programs but would offer consultation on curriculum and issues relating to program policy and practices. The Board is not a fiduciary body and will not be involved in financial transactions of any sort.
2. *Community Advisory Board Membership:* The Community Advisory Board will be composed of 12-16 members, including the Directors of the Messiah BSW & MSW Social Work Programs, the BSW & MSW Field Directors, four student representatives from the social work program (two from BSW & two from MSW), and 4-8 representatives from the practice community.

The Directors of the Social Work Program will appoint the Community Advisory Board representatives from the practice community. The Community Advisory Board, Social Work Faculty, and Messiah University Administration will generate suggestions for nominations of individuals to serve on the Community Advisory Board.

Every effort will be made to enrich the Board's work by actively seeking members who reflect racial, cultural, gender, and ethnic diversity and diversity in fields of practice.

3. *Meeting Schedule:* The Community Advisory Board will meet once each semester. Written notice of the meetings and the agenda will be provided to all members at least two weeks in advance. Minutes from all meetings and the proposed date for the next meeting will be distributed within 30 days of the meeting.
4. *Decision-Making Process:* Decisions for the Community Advisory Board and all subcommittees will be made by majority vote of those present. A quorum of at least three community representatives, in addition to the Social Work Program Directors and Field Coordinators, will be required for a vote.
5. *Amendments:* Proposed amendments to these guidelines may be made by any member of the Board and submitted to the Social Work Program Directors. Proposed amendments can be made at any time and must be submitted to members of the Board for their consideration at least two weeks prior to the meeting in which they will be considered.
6. *Expectations for Community Advisory Board Member:*
 - Provide feedback concerning the BSW & MSW curriculum and policies.
 - Participate in accreditation activities as appropriate (i.e., meeting as a small group with site visitors to discuss the program either in the early stages of earning accreditation or during the reaffirmation process; discuss annual program outcomes and make recommendations for improving outcomes as appropriate).
 - Support the field education program by providing practicum opportunities or networking with colleagues to provide practicum opportunities.
 - Be ambassadors for the BSW & MSW program.
 - Attend Community Advisory Board meetings.

MSW Roundtable

The goal of the MSW Roundtable is to provide regular opportunities for MSW students to meet with the MSW Program Director and other MSW Program faculty and staff for the purposes of community-building and the gathering of feedback on the experiences of students as they progress through the MSW program. Feedback can include all aspects of the explicit curriculum, the implicit curriculum, and field education. Targeted feedback may be sought by the MSW Program Director depending on current contextual factors. Feedback is utilized for continuous program improvement. The MSW Roundtable will meet at least one time each academic semester in a virtual format.

Student Representation on Standing Committees

The School of Graduate and Professional Studies appoints one graduate student to sit in on the University-level Community of Educators (COE) meetings. The Graduate Student Representative to the COE has a voice but no vote. Nominations for a Graduate Student Representative go to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies via the different Programs. The MSW Program will nominate MSW students for consideration.

The MSW Program regularly considers curriculum and other Program changes based on annual data collection and continuous program improvement. Assessment results and planned changes will be presented to students each fall for their feedback and will be discussed with the Community Advisory Committee where MSW students have representation.

Student Supports and Resources

Messiah University provides many supports and resources that are applicable to MSW students.

Americans with Disabilities Act

Any student whose disability falls within ADA guidelines should inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester of any special accommodation or equipment needs necessary to complete the requirements for this course. Students must register documentation with the [Office of Academic Accessibility](#). Contact sgpsstudentservices@messiah.edu if you have any questions.

Library and Librarian Assistance

The library is an obvious source of information for research, presentations, and projects. Currently, Elizabeth (Liz) Kielley is the specific library liaison assigned to the social sciences disciplines. Although any librarian is trained and prepared to assist you, Liz works specifically with the social sciences and is most familiar with the resources and databases that relate to this field. Do not hesitate to contact her if you are having trouble locating specific sources for your assignments, as she is more than willing to help you. For her specific work schedule, contact her directly at EKielley@messiah.edu or by calling ext. (717) 691-6006, ext. 3850.

Writing Support Services

Messiah University partners with Heartful Editor to provide editing support and writing coaching to students enrolled in graduate and adult degree programs (ADP). Heartful Editor's team of caring and supportive academic coaches and editors strive to uphold the highest ethical standards in their work with students, blending ethics and compassion to build a responsible and productive editing and coaching experience. Heartful Editor coaches and guides graduate and ADP students on writing and the mechanics of style, specifically the guidelines outlined in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA, 7th Edition), and the Chicago Manual of Style (17th Edition). The academic coaches and editors:

- Read and review all documents for grammar, spelling, punctuation, consistency in formatting, and alignment with style guidelines.
- Suggest alternative words or phrases, provide guidance on sentence structure, and advise on how to better organize ideas.
- Provide graduate and ADP students with a thorough overview of areas that need attention and improvement.
- Track all edits and changes for the client to review and accept or reject.
- Format master's theses and doctoral dissertations in alignment with Messiah University formatting standards.

To learn more about [Heartful Editor](#) or to schedule an appointment for editing or writing coaching, The Heartful Editor team will respond to your request within 2-3 business days.

Technical Support for Students

Technological support is available to all students and can be accessed remotely during the days and times listed on the Information Technology Services homepage. Please visit the [IT website](#) to learn more about what kind of support is available and how to ask questions or get support .

Attachment A

Student Acknowledgement Form

At the beginning of each academic year, every MSW student is required to thoroughly review the MSW Program Student Handbook and then sign and submit the *Student Acknowledgement Form* to the MSW Office.

Student Name (Print) _____

As an MSW student...

1. I understand that I am expected to adhere to the values, ethics, and standards of Messiah University, the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, the MSW Program, and the profession of social work.
2. I commit myself to seeking increased understanding of the ethical integration of Christian faith and social work practice.
3. I understand that as an MSW student, it is my responsibility to be intentional about developing the competencies to practice social work.
4. I understand that it is the expectation of the MSW Program and of the social work profession to always act in a professional manner.
5. I realize that although I may be accepted to the MSW Program at Messiah University, if my professional development and behavior is not deemed satisfactory by the Program faculty or the University, the Program has the right and responsibility to request a reevaluation of my suitability for the Program and/or the profession.

My signature below indicates that I understand and agree to the expectations of the MSW Program, and that I have read, understand, and agree to abide by all policies and guidelines established by Messiah University, the School of Graduate and Professional Studies, and the MSW Program. My signature also indicates that I authorize the Program to regularly review my progress within the Program and to evaluate my academic and professional performance for the purpose of monitoring my eligibility for progression in the Program. I understand that eligibility to continue at any time in the MSW Program is contingent upon satisfactorily meeting all stated expectations and progression in the major criteria.

Student Signature _____ Date _____

MSW Completion Plan/Course Sequencing Guides

Attachment B

Fall Cohort, Advanced Standing One-Year Plan

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 605 Professional Seminar II	8-week	1	
SOWK 620 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one focus area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 523 Psychopathology and Diagnosis Across the Lifespan (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 620 Collaboration in Interprofessional Teams (strongly recommended)			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness (OR)			
LEAD 505 Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Organizational Change			
SOWK 650 Field Instruction & Seminar III	16-week	3	
			7-10
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 625 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 535 Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 631 Health Policy and Legal Aspects of Healthcare			
			3-6
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 635 Advanced Social Work Research Methods	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area Course			
COUN 550 Crisis, Trauma, and Grief Counseling (OR)			
COUN 552 Trauma Counseling: Assessment and Intervention			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 560 Diversity & Leadership			
SOWK 655 Field Instruction & Seminar IV	16-week	3	
			6-9
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total

SOWK 630 Advanced Social Work Practice with Organization and Communities	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 543 Substance Abuse/Addictions and Families			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 506 Bioethics			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 515 Best Practices in Leadership (OR)			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness			
			3-6
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
SOWK 610 Mental Health and Social Policy (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 640 Economics of Healthcare			
LO Focus Area			
SOWK 615 The Social Work Leader and Manager (strongly recommended)			
SOWK 680 Professional Seminar III	8-week	2	
			2-5
Program total credits			*30

***Focus Area Courses are electives. It is recommended to choose a focus area (Mental Health-MH, Health-H or Leadership in Organizations-LO) and 9 related elective credits to meet the needed requirement. The one-year advanced standing plan has 30 required credits.**

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 605 Professional Seminar II	8-week	1	
SOWK 620 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families (YR2)	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one focus area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 523 Psychopathology and Diagnosis Across the Lifespan (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 620 Collaboration in Interprofessional Teams (strongly recommended)			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness (OR)			
LEAD 505 Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Organizational Change			
SOWK 650 Field Instruction & Seminar III (YR2)	16-week	3	
			7-10
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 625 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 535 Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 631 Health Policy and Legal Aspects of Healthcare			
			3-6
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 635 Advanced Social Work Research Methods	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area Course			
COUN 550 Crisis, Trauma, and Grief Counseling (OR)			
COUN 552 Trauma Counseling: Assessment and Intervention			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 560 Diversity & Leadership			
SOWK 655 Field Instruction & Seminar IV (YR2)	16-week	3	
			6-9
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 630 Advanced Social Work Practice with Organization and Communities (YR2)	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 543 Substance Abuse/Addictions and Families			
H Focus Area			

HLTH 506 Bioethics			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 515 Best Practices in Leadership (OR)			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness			
			3-6
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
*Option to choose one Focus Area course (YR2)	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
SOWK 610 Mental Health and Social Policy (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 640 Economics of Healthcare			
LO Focus Area			
SOWK 615 The Social Work Leader and Manager (strongly recommended)			
<i>SOWK 680 Professional Seminar III (YR2)</i>	8-week	2	
			2-5
Program total credits			*30

***Focus Area Courses are electives. It is recommended to choose a focus area (Mental Health-MH, Health-H or Leadership in Organizations-LO) and 9 related elective credits to meet the needed requirement. The two-year advanced standing plan has 30 required credits.**

Fall Cohort, Traditional Two-Year Plan

Year One Plan

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 505 Professional Seminar I	8-week	1	
SOWK 510 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	8-week	3	
SOWK 540 Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals	8-week	3	
<i>SOWK 560 Field Instruction & Seminar I</i>	<i>16-week</i>	3	
			10
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 515 Diversity and Social Justice	8-week	3	
SOWK 545 Generalist Social Work Practice with Families	8-week	3	
			6
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 550 Generalist Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	
<i>SOWK 565 Field Instruction & Seminar II</i>	<i>16-week</i>	3	
			6
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 520 Social Welfare Policy and Change	8-week	3	
SOWK 555 Generalist Social Work Practice with Organizations & Communities	8-week	3	
			6
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
IPEC 580 Research Methods	8-week	3	
			3

Year one total credits

31

Year Two Plan

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 605 Professional Seminar II	8-week	1	
SOWK 620 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals & Families	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one focus area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 523 Psychopathology and Diagnosis Across the Lifespan (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 620 Collaboration in Interprofessional Teams (strongly recommended)			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness (OR)			
LEAD 505 Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Organizational Change			
<i>SOWK 650 Field Instruction & Seminar III</i>	<i>16-week</i>	3	
			7-10
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 625 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	

*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 535 Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 631 Health Policy and Legal Aspects of Healthcare			
			3-6
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 635 Advanced Social Work Research Methods	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area Course			
COUN 550 Crisis, Trauma, and Grief Counseling (OR)			
COUN 552 Trauma Counseling: Assessment and Intervention			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 560 Diversity & Leadership			
SOWK 655 <i>Field Instruction & Seminar IV</i>	16-week	3	
			6-9
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 630 Advanced Social Work Practice with Organization and Communities	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 543 Substance Abuse/Addictions and Families			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 506 Bioethics			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 515 Best Practices in Leadership (OR)			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness			
			3-6
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
SOWK 610 Mental Health and Social Policy (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 640 Economics of Healthcare			
LO Focus Area			
SOWK 615 The Social Work Leader and Manager (strongly recommended)			
SOWK 680 Professional Seminar III	8-week	2	
			2-5
Year two total credits			*30
Program total credits			61

***Focus Area Courses are electives. It is recommended to choose a focus area (Mental Health-MH, Health-H or Leadership in Organizations-LO) and 9 related elective credits to meet the needed requirement. The Two-Year plan has 61 required credits.**

Fall Cohort, Traditional Three-to-Four Year Plan

Year One Plan

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 505 Professional Seminar I	8-week	1	
SOWK 510 Human Behavior in the Social Environment	8-week	3	
			4
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 515 Diversity and Social Justice	8-week	3	
			3
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 550 Generalist Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	
			3
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 520 Social Welfare Policy and Change	8-week	3	
			3

Year one total credits

13

Year Two Plan

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 540 Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals	8-week	3	
SOWK 560 Field Instruction & Seminar I	16-week	3	
			6
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 545 Generalist Social Work Practice with Families	8-week	3	
			3
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 565 Field Instruction & Seminar II	16-week	3	
			3
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 555 Generalist Social Work Practice with Organizations and	8-week	3	
			3
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
IPEC 580 Research Methods	8-week	3	
			3

Year two total credits

*18

Year Three and/or Four (These courses could all be taken in Year Three or extend to Year Four)

Fall Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 605 Professional Seminar II	8-week	1	
SOWK 620 Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals and Families (YR4)	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one focus area course	8-week	0-3	

MH Focus Area			
COUN 523 Psychopathology and Diagnosis Across the Lifespan (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 620 Collaboration in Interprofessional Teams (strongly recommended – YR4)			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness (OR)			
LEAD 505 Strategic Thinking, Planning, and Organizational Change			
<i>SOWK 650 Field Instruction & Seminar III (YR4)</i>	<i>16-week</i>	3	
			7-10
Fall Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 625 Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 535 Spiritually Integrated Psychotherapy			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 631 Health Policy and Legal Aspects of Healthcare			
			3-6
Spring Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 635 Advanced Social Work Research Methods	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area Course			
COUN 550 Crisis, Trauma, and Grief Counseling (OR)			
COUN 552 Trauma Counseling: Assessment and Intervention			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 560 Diversity & Leadership			
<i>SOWK 655 Field Instruction & Seminar IV (YR4)</i>	<i>16-week</i>	3	
			6-9
Spring Late Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 630 Advanced Social Work Practice with Organizations and Communities (YR4)	8-week	3	
*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
COUN 543 Substance Abuse/Addictions and Families			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 506 Bioethics			
LO Focus Area			
LEAD 515 Best Practices in Leadership (OR)			
LEAD 550 Organizational Effectiveness			
			3-6
Summer Early Session	Part of Term	Credits	Total
SOWK 680 Professional Seminar III (YR4)	8-week	2	

*Option to choose one Focus Area course	8-week	0-3	
MH Focus Area			
SOWK 610 Mental Health and Social Policy (strongly recommended)			
H Focus Area			
HLTH 640 Economics of Healthcare			
LO Focus Area			
SOWK 615 The Social Work Leader and Manager (strongly recommended -YR4)			
			2-5
Years Three-to-Four total credits			*30
Program total credits			61

***Focus Area Courses are electives. It is recommended to choose a focus area (Mental Health-MH, Health-H or Leadership in Organizations-LO) and 9 related elective credits to meet the needed requirement. The Three to-Four-Year plan has 61 required credits.**