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
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BA, Social Work, Eastern Nazarene College, Quincy, MA

Professional Interests: Research in racial justice climate in organizations; diversity, equity, and inclusion
The integration of faith and social work practice
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Personal Interests: Traveling, reading, spending time with family, singing in choirs, musical theater.

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MSW, Columbia University, New York, NY
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Professional Interests: Parent, Family and Community Engagement in Educational Settings, Social Emotional Learning, Non-profit Leadership

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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 for Academic Advising

Academic advising is provided to MSW students by 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 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 student's academic 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.*

The Office of the Registrar schedules an advising week in October for spring registration, in January for summer registration, and in March for fall registration. Active students are required to meet with their assigned advisor during that timeframe to review the course completion plan and select courses for the upcoming semester in conjunction with the advisor. The advisor must lift the 'advising hold,' which indicates that an advising session took place before the student can register for courses. When a student is admitted to the Program, the assigned advisor reaches out to the student to schedule an advising appointment as soon as possible to get that student registered for the upcoming semester. Each academic year, typically in the fall, the institution's Office of Academic Advising invites students, including MSW students, to complete a Graduate Advisor Evaluation.

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.

Policy for Professional Advising

Professional advising, which focuses on postgraduation preparation for entry into the profession, is provided to MSW students by program faculty, and primarily by the faculty member who has been assigned to them as an academic advisor. Professional advisors assist with field education integration, ensuring alignment with EPAS competency-based learning; promote professional development, including licensure preparation and career pathways; address concerns related to academic performance, conduct, and professional readiness; and refer students to appropriate campus and community resources. While professional advising can and does happen during the required scheduled times for academic advising just prior to course registration, advisors are available to meet with students at other times as warranted and provide flexible availability to meet the needs of students. Each academic year, typically in the fall, the institution's Office of Academic Advising invites students, including MSW students, to complete a Graduate Advisor Evaluation.

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

As emerging social work professionals, MSW students are expected to uphold high standards of ethical and professional behavior across all learning environments. These expectations are designed to support your development and readiness for professional practice. They apply to:

- **Classroom and online learning spaces** (including technology-based courses).
- **Field instruction and professional practice sites** that are part of the program.
- **Other learning-related settings** such as student organizations, governance activities, and interactions with faculty, staff, and peers—both within the University and in off-campus contexts.

The purpose of this policy is to guide students in practicing behaviors that reflect the values and ethics of the social work profession. While the program does not seek to regulate private life, certain behaviors outside the classroom may come to the University's attention if they raise concerns about professional readiness or safety.

If concerns arise—whether reported by faculty, staff, or other sources—the program will review the situation to understand its impact on your ability to continue in the program and to practice safely and ethically. This process is intended to be fair, transparent, and focused on supporting student growth while ensuring the safety of clients and the learning community.

Students are also responsible for promptly informing the Program Director if they are charged with a criminal offense at any point during their enrollment or between application and matriculation. This disclosure is essential for maintaining trust and meeting professional obligations. Failure to disclose may result in serious consequences, including dismissal from the program.

Ultimately, MSW students are encouraged to view these expectations as part of their professional formation. Practicing ethical and professional conduct now prepares you for the responsibilities and standards you will uphold throughout your career.

Student Professional Performance Standards:

The MSW Program is committed to preparing students for competent, ethical, and effective social work practice. To achieve this, we evaluate students' professional performance and functional abilities throughout their academic journey. These standards are designed to help you succeed and grow as a future social worker.

If you have concerns about meeting any of these expectations—at any point—please reach out to the Program Director. We are here to support you and explore reasonable accommodations or resources that can help.

Why These Standards Matter

Social work requires a combination of knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors to ensure the safety and well-being of clients and communities. These standards reflect the core competencies needed for success in both classroom and field settings.

Key Areas of Professional Performance
1. Physical Performance
- Ability to participate actively in online classes and in-person field placements.
- Capacity to meet course requirements using motor and sensory skills, with or without assistive devices.

2. Cognitive Performance
- Demonstrate accurate knowledge of social work as a profession.
- Think clearly and apply information appropriately in classroom and field settings.
- Integrate knowledge from social, behavioral, and biological sciences into practice.
- Conceptualize and apply theory to real-world situations.

3. Emotional Maturity & Mental Health
- Use sound judgment and seek help when personal challenges affect academic or professional performance.
- Manage stress effectively through self-care and prioritization.
- Assess your own strengths and limitations honestly.
- Understand how personal values and experiences influence professional behavior.
- Use self-disclosure appropriately and professionally.

4. Communication Skills
Written Communication
- Write clearly and professionally, using correct grammar and APA style.
- Complete written assignments to program standards.
Oral Communication
- Communicate effectively and sensitively with peers, faculty, clients, and professionals.
- Express ideas clearly and listen actively.
- Demonstrate proficiency in spoken English for coursework and fieldwork.

5. Interpersonal, Ethical, and Behavioral Performance
- Build constructive relationships with clients, peers, faculty, and supervisors.
- Show empathy, respect, and cultural sensitivity.
- Maintain professional boundaries and demonstrate integrity.
- Be punctual, dependable, and prepared for classes and fieldwork.
- Respond to feedback constructively and use it for growth.
- Adhere to program policies, agency guidelines, and the NASW Code of Ethics.
- Demonstrate accountability, adaptability, and commitment to lifelong learning.

Ethical Responsibilities
- Safeguard confidentiality of client information.
- Avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships.
- Refrain from any form of harassment or abuse.
- Uphold honesty and integrity in all academic and professional settings.
- Reflect professionalism in appearance, demeanor, and conduct.
- Commit to social work values, including respect for human dignity and social justice.

If Challenges Arise

We understand that life circumstances and personal challenges can impact performance. Our goal is to work with you to identify resources and strategies for success. Please communicate early and often so we can support your development as a professional.

Professional Performance Review Policy and Procedures

The MSW Program is committed to helping students develop the knowledge, skills, and professional behaviors necessary for effective social work practice. Faculty continuously monitor academic and professional performance to ensure students are progressing toward these goals. When concerns arise, we address them through advising, feedback, and—when needed—a **remediation plan** designed to support student success.

How Performance Is Reviewed

- **Coursework:** Program faculty review academic and professional performance throughout each course and share concerns with the Program Director during weekly team meetings.
- **Field Practicum:** Students are evaluated primarily through the Field Evaluation form. Field Instructors and Liaisons may also raise concerns with the Program Director before the evaluation is complete, as Field Liaisons remain in regular contact with Field Instructors and students through the Field Seminar courses.

When a Remediation Plan Is Developed

If feedback indicates that a student is not meeting expected standards, faculty will collaborate with the student to create a **remediation plan**. The goal is developmental—not punitive—to help the student succeed in the program and prepare for professional practice.

Examples of behaviors or performance issues that may warrant a remediation plan include:

- **Academic Concerns**
    - Repeated failure to meet assignment deadlines.
    - Poor writing quality that does not meet graduate-level standards.
    - Difficulty applying course concepts to practice situations.
    - Unintentional plagiarism or the use of AI outside of the course policy.
- **Professional Conduct**
    - Inconsistent attendance or tardiness in class or field placement.
    - Failure to maintain professional boundaries with clients or peers.
    - Disrespectful or inappropriate communication with faculty, staff, or colleagues.
    - Lack of cultural humility.
    - Difficulty meeting expectations in the field placement but not violating ethical standards.
- **Interpersonal or Emotional Challenges**
    - Difficulty accepting feedback or responding defensively.
    - Inability to manage stress in ways that affect performance or client safety.
    - Personal issues interfering with professional judgment or reliability.

What a Remediation Plan May Include

Plans are individualized and may involve:

- Using the **Writing Center** for support.
- Submitting drafts for review before final assignments.
- Repeating specific assignments or retaking a course.
- Reducing course load or taking a temporary break from the program.
- Regular check-ins with an advisor.
- Additional readings or assignments.
- Delaying field placement until readiness is demonstrated.

Remediation plans are documented in the student's file and reviewed with the student via Zoom or another virtual platform.

If the Plan Is Not Completed

If a student does not successfully complete the remediation plan, the Department reserves the right to remove the student from the MSW Program.

Confidentiality

Information shared during meetings with faculty or administrators will be used only for professional purposes related to student success and program standards. It will not remain confidential if it raises concerns about academic or professional performance.

Termination Policy for Professional Performance Misconduct:

The MSW Program prioritizes student success and professional development. While remediation is always the preferred approach for addressing concerns, there are circumstances where **professional probation or dismissal** may be necessary to protect clients, uphold ethical standards, and maintain program integrity.

Purpose

This policy outlines the process for addressing serious concerns related to **professional competence** or **ethical conduct**. It also provides examples of behaviors that may result in probation or dismissal.

Behaviors That May Lead to Immediate Probation or Dismissal

While many concerns can be addressed through remediation, the following behaviors are considered severe and may warrant immediate probation or dismissal:

- **Ethical Violations**
    - Breach of client confidentiality.
    - Falsifying records or academic work.
    - Engaging in dual relationships or conflicts of interest.
    - Sexual harassment or inappropriate relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty.
- **Professional Misconduct**
    - Physical, verbal, or emotional abuse toward clients, peers, or faculty.
    - Discriminatory behavior or failure to respect diversity.
    - Substance use that impairs judgment or client safety.
- **Legal or Safety Concerns**
    - Criminal charges related to violence, abuse, or fraud.
    - Behavior that jeopardizes client safety or violates agency policies.
- **Persistent Unprofessional Behavior**
    - Repeated failure to respond to feedback or comply with remediation plans.
    - Chronic absenteeism or abandonment of field placement.
    - Dishonesty about qualifications, background, or conduct.

Procedures for Addressing Serious Concerns

1. **Written Report**
   - o The individual raising the concern (field instructor, classroom instructor, advisor, etc.) submits a written statement to the **Program Director** detailing the nature of the concern and supporting evidence.
   - o The student receives a copy of the written concern and notification that a meeting will be scheduled.
2. **Initial Meeting**
   - o Within **10 days**, the Program Director will hold a virtual meeting with all parties involved to review the concern.
   - o The student may submit a written response prior to the meeting.
   - o The Program Director determines whether the concern is substantiated and if further action is needed.
3. **Written Decision**
   - o Within **5 working days** of the meeting, the Program Director provides a written response to the student and the reporting party indicating whether the concern warrants further action.
4. **Professional Review Committee (if needed)**
   - o Within **10 days**, the Program Director decides whether to appoint a **Social Work Professional Review Committee**.
   - o The committee includes:
     - ▪ A faculty chairperson.
     - ▪ Two MSW faculty members.
     - ▪ A student representative chosen by the student involved.
   - o The committee meets within **10 days** of appointment to gather evidence and make a recommendation regarding sanctions.
5. **Possible Outcomes**
   - o **Warning** with documented expectations for improvement (remediation plan).
   - o **Probation** with specific conditions outlined in writing.
   - o **Dismissal** from the MSW Program.
6. **Final Decision**
   - o Within **10 days** of receiving the committee's recommendation, the Program Director communicates the final decision in writing to the student and the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.
7. **Appeals**
   - o All appeals must be submitted to the Dean of the School of Graduate and Professional Studies.

Commitment to Fairness

Our goal is to ensure that all decisions are made with transparency, respect, and a focus on student development—while safeguarding the ethical and professional standards of social work.

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.

Exit Survey

All students who are about to complete the Program are asked to provide feedback regarding the explicit curriculum through a standardized and electronically administered exit survey. The SWEAP Exit Survey includes over 100 items, covering program characteristics, student demographics, student employment experience and plans, student educational experience and plans, as well as student evaluation of the social work program's implicit and explicit curriculum. Responsive to the CSWE EPAS requirements, the survey asks for student input on the explicit curriculum in terms of their preparedness to practice social work through the lens of the social work competencies and through an evaluation of field education. This input is then utilized as part of the Program's efforts for continuous improvement.

Course Evaluations

At the end of each course offered in the curriculum, students are asked to complete an evaluation of the course, which asks about both the quality of the course and the quality of the instruction. This is a standardized assessment so that faculty can see how their course compares to other courses in the university, and other courses in a larger, national sample. Survey data is aggregated, and faculty do not

see the course evaluation results until after grades for the course have been posted. Students are given about two weeks to complete the evaluation.

Field Evaluations

At the end of each field practicum, students are asked to complete an evaluation of their field experience, which includes an evaluation of the field placement site and an evaluation of the Field Instructor. This centers the student voice and helps ensure that the field component of the curriculum is meeting the educational needs of students.

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 Instuction & 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 Instuction & 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)			
SOWK 680 Professional Seminar III **(YR2)**	*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	
SOWK 560 Field Instruction & Seminar I	*16-week*	*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	
SOWK 565 Field Instruction & Seminar II	*16-week*	*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			
SOWK 650 Field Instuction & 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
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			
SOWK 650 Field Instruction & Seminar III **(YR4)**	*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 **(YR4)**	*16-week*	*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			

	Part of Term	Credits	Total
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