



GRAND VALLEY
STATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT HANDBOOK:
POLICIES, PRACTICES AND
PROCEDURES FOR

THE BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK
(BSW) PROGRAM

&

THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK
(MSW) PROGRAM

2024-2027

GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

STUDENT HANDBOOK

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome and Accreditation Statement	4
I. GVSU School of Social Work.....	5
A. Faculty and Staff.....	5
B. School of Social Work Mission Statement.....	5
C. EPAS Core Competencies, Dimensions and Observable Behaviors	6
D. Student Code of Conduct.....	6
E. NASW Code of Ethics.....	6
F. International Code of Ethics	7
G. Professional Abilities.....	7
II. School of Social Work Student Policies	8
A. Student Academic Advising and Mentorship	8
B. Academic Credit for Work or Life Experiences	9
C. Non-Degree Seeking Students.....	9
D. Changing Status from Non-degree to Degree Seeking	9
E. Repetition of Curriculum	10
F. Transfer Credit from other CSWE Accredited Institutions	10
G. Approval of Course Waivers, Course Substitutions, And Individual Program Plans.....	11
H. Academic Honesty	12
I. Assessment and Achievement of Competencies	13
J. Accommodation Needs.....	13
K. Human Subjects and Review Policies	13
L. Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures.....	14
M. Further Administrative Appeal Procedures	15
N. GVSU Academic Review	17
O. Withdrawal from the University	18
P. Dismissal from the University.....	19
Q. Felony or Misdemeanor Conviction	19
III. MSW Program	20
A. MSW Program Mission and Goals	20
B. Generalist Curriculum.....	21
C. Advanced Generalist Curriculum.....	21
D. MSW Study Options	22
E. Admission Policies for Regular MSW and MSW Advanced Standing.....	23
F. Admission Requirements for Regular Standing Students	23
G. Regular Standing Conditional Admission.....	24
H. Advanced Standing MSW Degree Admission	25

I.	Applicants with a BSW who do not meet Advanced Standing requirements.....	27
J.	MSW and MPA Degree Programs.....	28
K.	Application Review Process	29
IV.	BSW Program.....	29
A.	BSW Program Mission and Goals.....	29
B.	Program Requirements	30
C.	Admission	31
D.	BSW Candidacy.....	34
V.	Practicum [Field] Education	35
A.	Philosophy	35
VI.	Student Information.....	37
A.	Disability Support Resources (DSR)	37
B.	Student Organizations.....	37
C.	GVSU SSW ListServ.....	38
D.	Scholarship Information	39
E.	Financial Aid	39
F.	Graduate Assistantship Responsibilities	40
G.	Grand Valley State University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.....	40
H.	Campus Health Services.....	40
I.	Department of Public Safety	40
J.	Career Services.....	40
K.	Counseling.....	40
L.	Writing Center.....	40
M.	Council of Social Work Education	41
N.	Michigan SW Licensing.....	41
O.	National Association of Social Workers.....	41
	Appendix A: The Social Work Competencies for Generalists	42
	Appendix B: The Social Work Competencies for Advanced Generalists	43
	Appendix C: The Ten Professional Abilities and Definitions.....	44

Welcome Students Starting GVSU School of Social Work

The Grand Valley State University School of Social Work exists to train competent social workers at the BSW and MSW levels. To that end, we partner actively, consistently and intentionally with constituents to provide rigorous, ethical coursework and field experiences consistent with the 2022 Council on Social Work Education standards. These standards require that social work students at the foundation and advanced levels competently demonstrate the 9 CSWE Core Competencies and their associated dimensions and observable behaviors. The BSW and MSW curricula combine with our ongoing, dynamic assessment process to assure that our graduates are competent, by CSWE standards, and in the contexts in which they practice. Our model is one of comprehensiveness, as we employ the Generalist and Advanced Generalist models. These assure that social workers trained at GVSU are prepared to practice across contexts, within multiple systems simultaneously, and maintain a developmental, inclusive and ecological stance. Our faculty and staff are committed to a learning environment that continuously challenges each of us to uphold the ethics of our profession, promotes diversity of all forms, incites a spirit of inquiry and an environment of student mentoring and support. To that end, we share accountability for exchange of information and our behaviors as professionals and students; the pages that follow as our guide in this pursuit. Our policies are designed to be in service to our profession and our constituents in an effort to assure a competently trained workforce. Welcome to the GVSU School of Social Work!

Accreditation Statement

The Grand Valley State University School of Social Work's BSW and MSW programs are accredited by the Commission on Social Work Education (CSWE). For further information regarding the standards of our program for implicit and explicit curriculum, please see the following link on the 2022 Educational Policy and Academic Standards (EPAS): <https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/> or <http://www.cswe.org/>

I. GVSU School of Social Work

A. Faculty and Staff

A current listing of the GVSU Social Work faculty and staff can be found at:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/school-of-social-work-faculty-information-41.htm>

B. School of Social Work Mission Statement

The School of Social Work derives its mission from Grand Valley State University's mission of liberally educating students to shape their lives, their professions, and their societies. Toward that end, the School prepares its students to attain social work practice and professional leadership; advance the field's knowledge of effective professional practice and education through research and evaluation; enhance and sustain the welfare and well-being of the citizens, organizations and communities of West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world; and further the goals of the University and of the social work profession in this region and beyond.

All of the School's programs are grounded in the profession's body of knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes which support and enhance the opportunities, resources, and capacities of people to achieve their full potential; prevent and alleviate personal, interpersonal, organizational and societal problems; and improve the conditions that limit human development and adversely impact the quality of human life. The School celebrates and affirms the importance of diversity in all of its forms, and it supports the expansion of human rights, cultural competence, empowerment, social and political justice, civic participation and equality in West Michigan and around the world.

The School's legacy emphasizes social justice and meeting the significant professional workforce needs of the expansive West Michigan social services sector. An additional distinctive feature of the School is the integration and promotion of domestic and international service learning opportunities that prepares students for 21st century practice in increasingly global economic and social contexts.

C. EPAS Core Competencies, Dimensions, and Observable Behaviors

Grand Valley State University School of Social Work curriculum is designed, in both the BSW and MSW programs, to teach the Educational Policy and Academic Standards (EPAS) Core Competencies. Each core competency includes dimensions associated with knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes and observable behaviors that students are expected to demonstrate within the classroom and field practicum. All core competencies are taught within the curricula of the BSW program and the MSW program. All observable behaviors appropriate to each program are supervised and evaluated within the field practicum. A complete listing of the 2022 Generalist and GVSU Advanced Generalist Core Competencies can be found in **Appendix A and B** of this manual.

D. Student Code of Conduct: Rights & Responsibilities

Standards of conduct are established in order to generate an atmosphere in which the goals and objectives of the institution can flourish. Individual rights can only be ensured with acceptance of individual and group responsibilities and respect for the rights of others. Individuals attending Grand Valley State University (GVSU) automatically place themselves under the applicable rules and regulations of the institution. The expectations of students are enumerated in the Student Code.

Students can refer to this link for GVSU policy and procedure information outside of the School of Social Work on many topics, including:

- Student Conduct
- Rules and Regulations
- Judicial Process
- Student Grievance
- Academic Integrity & Plagiarism

This can be found using the following link:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>

E. NASW Code of Ethics

Students are expected to follow the ethical guidelines of the profession of social work as communicated through the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics. This can be found using the following link:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

F. International Code of Ethics

A statement of the Ethical Principles from the International Federation of Social Workers may be found at:

<http://ifsw.org/policies/statement-of-ethical-principles/>

G. Professional Abilities

Professional abilities are attributes, characteristics or behaviors that are required for success in the profession (Adapted and developed as Generic Abilities by the Physical Therapy Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1995). Journal of Physical Therapy Education 9(1).)

The School of Social Work recognizes that professional behaviors are influenced through education and experiences and expects to see students engage in new skills in an appropriately developmental manner.

Students are expected to demonstrate behaviors consistent with professional standards. Failure to do so may result in remedial planning and consistent failure to exhibit professional behavior may result in delays or removal from the Social Work program (Appendix C). Before completion of any School of Social Work program, students are expected to demonstrate professional entry-level skills in the nine Professional Abilities articulated in Appendix A & B.

Our competency assessment model indicates the many ways data related to curriculum, teaching and learning are gathered and evaluated in GVSU's School of Social Work. Students submit "common assignments", develop field practicum learning contracts and participate in multiple field assessments. These processes are essential to evaluate the achievement of competency based on the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes and observable behaviors that form the dimensions of each competency. The data are evaluated and used to revise and improve curriculum, resulting in students who are better prepared to contribute to the profession of social work.

II. School of Social Work Student Policies

A. Student Academic Advising and Mentorship

The School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to excellent advising of students. Through the combined efforts of the faculty, staff, and the College of Education and Community Innovation (CECI) Advising Center, students are provided with comprehensive advising services. Students are assigned an academic advisor upon admission into the SSW. Advisors provide:

- Degree and course planning;
- Development and review of degree progress plans in My Path;
- Personalized course selection assistance;
- Outreach and support to students in academic jeopardy;
- Rights to students by informing them of SSW and GVSU policies and procedures, including grievances and appeals; and
- Referrals to faculty mentors in the School of Social Work.

BSW students meet with their advisors as soon as they declare the social work major. MSW students meet with their advisors prior to starting their program. Advisors attend orientations and have ample availability. Students may schedule individual appointments by contacting the advising office through [Navigate](#).

Student Professional Mentorship

The School of Social Work (SSW) is committed to excellent mentorship of students. BSW students are assigned a faculty mentor in their admission letter, and MSW students are [matched](#) with a mentor and overseen by the Program's Administrative Assistant. Full-time faculty provide support which:

- Augments information provided to students by the CECI Advising Center;
- Assists with the creation of long-term goals;
- Provides guidance regarding the social work profession career, employment planning, social work projects, high-impact professional experiences, and social work practicum experiences;
- Connects students to resources and support when experiencing academic difficulty;
- Advocates on behalf of students experiencing academic challenges; and
- Protects the rights of students by informing them of SSW and GVSU policies and procedures, including grievances and appeals.

Faculty mentors maintain a minimum of six office hours per week to ensure their availability and promote student access to their advice. Advisors may provide academic and professional advising services to students via verbal, print and electronic communication, as well as in face-to-face contacts, by appointment.

Advising and Mentorship:

Grand Valley State University recognizes that advising is integral to a college education. The advising process establishes a collaborative relationship between student and advisor in which the student feels a sense of connection, support, and guidance. Effective advising is developmental. It responds to and creates growth and change within the student. Advising encourages students to think critically, seek out resources, and develop action plans. It provides students with the information and encouragement they need to take personal responsibility for exploring options and making decisions. Ultimately, advising allows each student to achieve a meaningful and successful educational experience.

Students are encouraged to maintain regular contact with their advisor and mentor to enhance their educational experience, assuring steady progress toward earning their social work degree.

The BSW Program Director, in conjunction with the CECI Advising Center staff, provides informational sessions for undergraduate students that facilitate academic and career guidance for students who declare social work as their major. These sessions are also open to students seeking information about declaring social work as their major.

B. Academic Credit for Work or Life Experience

The GVSU School of Social Work does not award academic credit for student's life experiences or previous work experiences.

C. Non-Degree Seeking Graduate Students

Students who are not seeking a graduate degree or who have not completed all of the admissions requirements of their chosen program may be granted "[non-degree seeking](#)" student status; and may subsequently be considered for transfer to "degree seeking" status. A maximum of six SW semester credits earned at GVSU as a "non-degree seeking" student may be considered for transfer to "degree seeking" status. Enrollment as a "non-degree seeking" student does *not guarantee* formal admission to the MSW program. "Non-degree seeking" status students are limited to taking two of the following classes: SW 600, SW

601, SW 610, and/or SW 620.

D. Changing Status from Non-degree to Degree Seeking

Students who seek a change in status must submit a [GVSU Degree Seeking Application Form](#) and all required School of Social Work admissions materials to the GVSU Admissions Office.

E. MSW Repetition of Curriculum

In accordance with CSWE Educational Policies and Academic Standards, BSW graduates from an accredited program entering the MSW program do not repeat foundation course curricula that have been mastered in their BSW programs. This forms the basis for the Advanced Standing program, which requires BSW students demonstrating mastery of foundation materials through their grades on BSW coursework, and admission to the MSW within 8 years of obtaining a BSW.

F. Transfer Credit from other CSWE Accredited Institutions

MSW Program

The policy and procedures of the MSW Program regarding the transfer of credits is as follows:

- No transfer of credit is awarded for coursework taken toward the completion of another degree.
- A maximum of 18 semester hours of transfer credit is granted for graduate courses completed with a grade of B or better at another CSWE-accredited MSW program.
- Coursework from a CSWE accredited institution is considered for transfer credits when the student provides an official transcript and the actual course syllabus from the transferring institution. It is the responsibility of the student to provide these documents to the MSW Director within 60 days of official admission to the MSW Program. The MSW Program Director has 30 days to respond to the incoming student and their academic advisors regarding receipt of the required information.
- Only credits earned in a CSWE-accredited MSW program can be transferred as elective or equivalent to MSW Program courses. Course waivers are issued to eliminate needless duplication, and to enhance student learning, but not to circumvent policies, practices and standards, established by CSWE, GVSU, and/or the MSW Program.
- Transfer credits are not granted for courses completed more than

- eight years before enrollment in the MSW program.
- Notwithstanding the award of transfer credits, students must meet all MSW degree requirements described in the catalog under which they are admitted to the MSW Program.
 - Transfer credit grades are not included in computing students' grade point average in the MSW Program.

BSW Program

The policy and procedures of the BSW Program regarding the transfer of credits is as follows:

- With the exception of SW 150, only credits earned in a CSWE-accredited BSW program can be transferred as equivalent to GVSU BSW Program courses. Course waivers are issued to eliminate needless duplication, and to enhance student learning, but not to circumvent policies, practices and standards, established by the CSWE, the University, and the BSW Program.
- BSW students must have earned the minimum grade of B- in the social work course for which transfer credit is requested.
- Despite the award of transfer credits, students must meet all BSW degree requirements described in the GVSU catalog.
- Credit is never granted by the BSW Program for Field Practicum in Social Work SW 490-493 or Senior Seminar in Social Work (Capstone) SW 495.

G. Approval of Course Waivers, Course Substitutions, and Individual Program Plans

The GVSU School of Social Work follows university protocol regarding the approval of course waivers, course substitutions and individual program plans.

All students follow the course of study and curriculum approved by the full faculty and noted in the GVSU catalog, online, and in printed materials in the School of Social Work. Course waivers, course substitutions, and changes in an individual program plan must meet GVSU requirements for graduation and accreditation requirements set forth by the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE). Independent study credits may only be completed for elective credits, not to replace program requirements.

The Graduate Program Director (MSW Director) must formally approve, in writing, any deviation from the approved course of study. The BSW

Director has the same responsibility related to the undergraduate program. For routine requests, the appropriate program director may make a decision and communicate the decision in writing to the student and the student academic advisor, with a copy placed in the student file.

The Program Director may request a meeting with the student and/or the student academic advisor as necessary for clarification or to discuss alternatives before making a written decision and communicating this to all parties noted above and the student file.

If any potential decision may affect, influence, impinge, or create a question regarding GVSU policies or procedures, School of Social Work policies and procedures, or policies in place through CSWE accreditation, guidance should be sought by the program director from the GVSU Graduate Dean, SSW Director, or CSWE accrediting staff, depending upon the issue.

In all cases, the student and any parties involved will receive written communication apprising them of the process and/or determination.

H. Academic Honesty

The GVSU Student Code states, “The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of teachers and scholars. Grand Valley State University expects that both faculty and students will honor these principles...” Any ideas or material taken from another source for either written or oral presentation must be fully acknowledged. Offering the work of someone else as one’s own is plagiarism.

The GVSU Student Code also states, “Cheating and plagiarism are the two most obvious violations of academic honesty. In brief, plagiarism is borrowing ideas, words, organization, etc., from another source or person and claiming them as original. Such activity may result in failure of a specific assignment, an entire course, or, if flagrant, dismissal from the University.” Details of GVSU policies and rules regarding academic honesty are described in the GVSU Student Code:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g., ChatGPT, GPT, DALL-E, Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, GitHub Copilot, and anything after) is not permitted unless explicitly stated in the course syllabus.

The School of Social Work considers violations of rules regarding academic honesty to be a serious offense, which may result in lowering a

grade on an assignment or test, failure of an assignment or test, failure of the course or dismissal from the GVSU School of Social Work program.

I. Assessment and Achievements of Competencies

Students' professional competence is assessed at multiple points throughout the curriculum. One way competence is assessed is through common assignments. These assignments measure the same competency across sections of the same course. Common assignments are clearly indicated in course syllabi. Competency assessment occurs separately from grade assignment in the Black Board Ultra LMS. Student competence is also assessed during practicum education. Evaluated learning contracts provide explicit indicators of student competence over time. Assessment is required for our continued accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

J. Accommodation Needs

Any GVSU student who requires accommodations due to a learning difference, disability, or any other form of neurodiversity is encouraged to reach out to the Office of Disability Support Resources. It is essential to initiate this contact if a student seeks support or accommodations. For additional details, please visit the website at <http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/> or call 616-331-2490. The office is situated at 4015 JHZ Building on the GVSU Allendale campus.

K. Human Subjects and Review Policies

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is comprised of GVSU faculty, staff and community members who review proposed research studies involving living persons.

The HRRC IRB ensures that the basic rights and welfare of research participants are fostered and protected. The HRRC supports researchers through its coordinated activities in education, regulatory compliance oversight, and post-approval monitoring. All research involving human subjects performed at GVSU and/or by GVSU students, staff, and/or faculty must be reviewed and approved by the HRRC prior to beginning the research. BSW and MSW students are required to have a full-time faculty member serve as a co-principal investigator and must submit verification of Responsible Conduct of Research training.

Additional and updated information related to Human Research and Review is located at: <https://www.gvsu.edu/irb/>

L. Student Appeal and Grievance Procedures

Grievance policy and procedure. When BSW/MSW students have a grievance, they may utilize the Program's grievance policy and procedures to resolve this.

The BSW/MSW Programs have adopted this policy and developed procedures to address three specific types of grievances: grievances related to alleged incidents with social work faculty, staff, or students; grievances related to policies and procedures of the BSW/MSW Program; and grade appeals.

Within the BSW/MSW Programs, students with a complaint regarding incidents, policies, or conditions must take the following steps to resolve their grievance.

1. Incident

- The student seeking to grieve an incident concerning a BSW/MSW faculty member should first discuss the issue with the faculty member to seek resolution. Students should seek resolution through counsel with their faculty mentor regarding ambiguous concerns.
- If resolution is not achieved, the student should inform the BSW/MSW Director in writing about the grievance. The grievance should be a complete and specific account of the incident and include names, dates, location, evidence and the remedy the student seeks.
- A formal written grievance must be initiated by the student within 30 days of an alleged incident to be considered for administrative/review/resolution.
- The BSW/MSW Program Director may use discretion by either, a) resolving the issue to the satisfaction of the student and faculty/staff member, or b) forming a Faculty/Advisory Committee (FAC) to make a recommendation to the BSW/MSW Director for resolution. If an FAC is formed, the BSW/MSW Director generally does not participate in their deliberations. Those named in the grievance may be asked to respond but are not included in the committee selected by the BSW/MSW Program Director. The person or persons about whom a grievance has been filed may not serve on this committee.
- The student will be notified by the BSW/MSW Program Director in writing within 10 working days of the faculty committee recommendation.

If a student is not satisfied with the recommendation of the FAC, she/he may file a written appeal within 10 working days to the Director of the School of Social Work. This appeal must contain any new information the student may have and a clarification of old information. The Director may also gather additional information and will respond within 15 working days of receiving the information with a decision to the student. If the student is not satisfied with the recommendation of the School of Social Work Director, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Education and Community Innovation in writing within 10 working days. The Dean will decide and notify the student within 10 working days of receiving the appeal.

2. Policies and Procedures

- Students may **NOT** appeal policy matters of the GVSU School of Social Work. Students may appeal procedure(s) that implement a policy or the inconsistent application of a policy. Examples could include, alleged discrimination, differential treatment of students, etc.
- A student wishing to change a GVSU School of Social Work policy should address the request in writing to the Director of the GVSU School of Social Work for consideration and possible referral to the full faculty for consideration.
- A student seeking to grieve a procedural concern should first discuss the issue with the appropriate faculty or program director to attempt to find resolution.
- If an appropriate resolution cannot be agreed upon, the student should inform the MSW or BSW Director (depending upon student status), in writing, regarding the grievance. The grievance should be a complete and specific account of the incident(s) and include names, dates, location, evidence, attempt(s) to remediate and the resolution the student is seeking.
- A formal written grievance must be initiated by the student within 30 days of an alleged incident to be considered for administrative review/resolution.
- The BSW or MSW Director may use their discretion by either, a) resolving the issue to the satisfaction of the student and faculty/staff member, or b) forming a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) to review and make a recommendation to the BSW or MSW Director for resolution. If an FAC is formed, the BSW or MSW Director generally does not participate in their deliberations. Those named in the grievance may be asked by the Program Director or faculty advisory committee to respond to the concern(s) in writing or in person.
- The student will be notified in writing within 30 days of the receipt of the written grievance regarding the decision of the Program Director. This may be extended if faculty members or the student are unavailable for meetings.

3. Grade Appeals

- Grade appeals should be submitted immediately after receipt of the final grade but no later than the final day of the subsequent GVSU semester. See GVSU catalog www.gvsu.edu/catalog. NO GRADE APPEALS WILL BE CONSIDERED AFTER THE FINAL DAY OF THE SUBSEQUENT GVSU SEMESTER.
- A student seeking to appeal a grade should first discuss the issue with the faculty involved to attempt to find resolution. A student should seek counsel with their academic advisor if they are unclear about whether a grade should be formally grieved. If the faculty member is not available to discuss possible resolution of the grade, the student must still submit a written grade appeal to the appropriate Program Director (see below) no later than the final day of the subsequent GVSU semester.
- If an appropriate resolution cannot be agreed upon between the faculty member and the student, or if the faculty member is unavailable, the student should inform the MSW or BSW Director (depending upon student status), in writing, regarding the grade appeal. The grade appeal should be a complete and thorough recap of all graded assignments in the course, copies of all graded papers and assignments, a copy of the course syllabus, attempt(s) to remediate and the resolution the student is seeking.
- Written grade appeals should focus on **objective** grading information according to the syllabus. **Subjective** interpretations or scoring of assignments by a faculty member are not generally considered for review.
- Written grade appeals are for the *entire course*, meaning *all* graded assignments and papers are open to rescoring and reconsideration. Grade appeals are not limited to one assignment in a course.
- The BSW or MSW Director may use their discretion by either, a) resolving the issue to the satisfaction of the student and faculty/staff member, or b) forming a Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC) to review and make a recommendation to the BSW or MSW Director for resolution. If an FAC is formed, the BSW or MSW Director generally does not participate in their deliberations. Those named in the grievance may be asked by the Program Director or faculty advisory committee to respond to the concern(s) in writing or in person.
- The student will generally be notified in writing within 30 days of the receipt of the written grade appeal regarding the decision of the Program Director. This may be extended if faculty members or the student are unavailable for meetings.

M. Further Administrative Appeal Procedures

If the student *or* faculty member is not satisfied with the resolution of any appeal or grievance by the MSW Director or BSW Director, they may file a further written appeal within 10 working days of receipt of the formal written resolution from the BSW or MSW Program Director. The next level of appeal is submitted to the Director of the School of Social Work (unit head). The appeal may include any new information or further clarification of old information by the student or faculty. The Director may also gather additional information and will respond in writing within 30 days of receiving the written appeal with a decision. This time frame may be extended if the School of Social Work Director is unavailable during this 30 day period. The written response will be sent to the student, faculty member, and appropriate program director.

If the student *or* faculty member is not satisfied with the recommendation of the Director of the School of Social Work, they may appeal to the Dean of the College of Community and Public Service, in writing within 10 working days of receipt of the written decision by the Director of the School of Social Work. Procedures for any review by the Dean or beyond are articulated in the GVSU Student Code.

N. GVSU Academic Review

BSW Students:

The GVSU academic review procedure, including probation, dismissal and appeal for undergraduate students is highlighted in the GVSU catalog.

<https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-41>

In terms of academic performance, a BSW student is required to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in all social work courses, maintain a 2.5 overall GPA, and earn credit in all fieldwork courses to remain in good standing within the Program. A student who does not maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in all social work courses, and/or does not maintain an overall GPA of 2.5, and/or does not receive credit in fieldwork is academically dismissed from the BSW Program.

While the university requires an overall GPA of 2.0 to maintain good academic standing, please note that a BSW student is required to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in all social work courses and an overall GPA of 2.5 to remain in good standing within the GVSU School of Social Work.

MSW Students:

A MSW student is required to maintain an overall 3.0 GPA in all social work courses and earn credit in all practicum courses to remain in good standing in the Program. A student whose cumulative grade point average falls below 3.0 after completion of nine hours of graduate level coursework will be placed on academic probation. Such students must achieve at least a 3.0 overall GPA at all times after the next nine hours of coursework to remain in the program. An overall GPA of 2.0 or below at any time following nine hours of graduate level coursework means automatic dismissal from the university.

A student academically dismissed from the MSW program may apply for readmission after one year. Readmission is not automatic and includes a review by MSW Program Director of the circumstances leading to academic dismissal and considerations of academic growth after dismissal.

If the MSW Program Director affirms the student's dismissal, the student can appeal the Program Director's decision to the Dean of the College of Education and Community Innovation.

Grade appeals must be submitted immediately after receipt of the final grade and/or no later than the first day of the subsequent semester.

Please note that School of Social Work policies may be more restrictive due to accreditation than University policies. For additional information, please refer to the GVSU catalog:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/catalog/navigation/academic-policies-and-regulations.htm#anchor-68>

O. Withdrawal from the University

Students withdrawing from GVSU during an academic term must obtain a complete withdrawal form from the registrar and have it signed by the Dean of Academic Resources, the Director of Housing, and the Director of Financial Aid, if applicable. The completed form must be returned to the Student Assistance Center. Any refunds will be based on the date the completed form is filed with the registrar.

MSW students may request a leave of absence from the Graduate School: <http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/forms-library-31.htm>. The MSW Director must sign this request prior to submission.

Students in good standing who wish to return to GVSU after an absence of two or more semesters must submit a Petition to Return form to the registrar prior to registration: <http://www.gvsu.edu/registrar/appeal-after-dismissal-44.htm>.

P. Dismissal from the University

The School of Social Work is under no obligation to assist students who have been dismissed from GVSU, whatever the reason for their dismissal. The School of Social Work may decide whether to support a student's application for readmission to the School of Social Work. Without support for readmission from the School of Social Work, the student may still appeal to GVSU for reinstatement and apply to another academic unit.

Q. Felony or Misdemeanor Conviction

The application for licensure as a social worker requires information regarding felony conviction, misdemeanor conviction punishable by imprisonment for a maximum term of two years, misdemeanor conviction involving the illegal delivery, possession, or use of alcohol or a controlled substance (including motor vehicle violations), and treatment for substance abuse in the past 2 years. The Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (L.A.R.A.) reviews applications for licensure and considers felony or misdemeanor convictions in their decision regarding whether or not to grant a social work license. The L.A.R.A. may refuse to grant a social work license to the applicant.

Before beginning the Social Work program at GVSU, any student who has a previous felony or misdemeanor, abuse or neglect substantiation, any other legal or moral matter that may appear in a records review should seek consultation from the GVSU SSW and the appropriate licensing, law enforcement and human services organizations (L.A.R.A., Michigan State Police, and the Michigan Health and Human Services Central Registry) regarding their ability to qualify for a license to practice social work in the State of Michigan.

The policies and procedures related to certification of moral fitness by these organizations change from time-to-time and may impact the ability of the SSW to obtain certain field placements as well as impact the ability to become licensed in the future and become employed in a position requiring such clearance and licensure.

III. MSW Program

A. MSW Program Mission and Goals

MSW Program Mission

The mission of the GVSU Master of Social Work (MSW) Program is to prepare advanced generalist social workers who enhance and sustain the welfare and well-being of the citizens, organizations and communities of West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world; and who further the goals of the University and of the social work profession in this region and beyond. This is accomplished through professional leadership; advancement of the social work field's knowledge through research and evaluation; and a focus on diversity, social justice and human rights. West Michigan's unique setting consists of diverse cultural communities as well as urban and rural settings, creating significant potential for skilled social work professionals to make a profound impact on the community.

MSW Program Goals

The goals of the MSW Program are:

1. To provide a foundational MSW curriculum and an advanced generalist social work curriculum that prepares MSW graduates for autonomous social work practice that promotes social, economic and environmental justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within individual, organizational and community contexts within, but not limited to, West and Northern Michigan and the state of Michigan.
2. To award the MSW degree to individuals who are skilled practitioners adhering to the *NASW Code of Ethics*, incorporating diversity into their practice and capable of assuming leadership and scholarly professional roles in the community, region, state, national and global communities
3. To contribute to the ongoing development of professional social work knowledge and practice through research and scholarly inquiry that employ state-of-the-art technology.
4. To prepare students for continued professional development opportunities throughout their careers, including doctoral education.

B. Generalist Curriculum

The primary purpose of the Generalist Curriculum is to provide the generalist knowledge essential for effective and competent professional social work practice from an Advanced Generalist perspective. The generalist content is consistent with the values and ethics of the social work profession. Each generalist course includes relevant content about the role of social policy, social research, social work practice, human diversity, and vulnerable populations.

The Generalist Curriculum addresses the necessity for the broad range of social work skills needed to strengthen the adaptive capabilities of individuals, families, groups, and communities to influence social and physical environments to be more responsive to human needs. Students completing the Generalist Curriculum develop the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that transfer from one setting, population-at-risk, geographic area, and social problem to another.

Courses in the Generalist Curriculum expose students to new advances in practice knowledge through an integrative approach to Generalist social work practice, beginning to build a bridge from the Generalist method to the Advanced Generalist approach of social work practice. Assessment and intervention on three levels: individual, environment, and societal; along with skill development in a variety of methods: individual, family, group, organizational, and community, is stressed in each generalist course. This model of social work practice illustrates a multi-level approach to Generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students learn the general problem-solving method of social work practice, along with acquiring an introduction to Advanced Generalist skills further explicated in the Advanced Generalist Curriculum. Advanced Generalist social workers are also concerned with societal conditions in their efforts to improve the quality of life and employ knowledge and skills regarding social policy and service delivery systems to improve social and economic justice.

C. Advanced Generalist Curriculum

Advanced Generalist models such as that offered by GVSU are built upon a liberal education foundation that promotes the use of critical thinking skills and conscientious application of advanced practice social work knowledge, skills, values and ethics. The model integrates the advanced practice skills concentration curriculum to equip graduates to meet the

diverse demands presented by unique social service delivery system. The School's Advanced Generalist curriculum is designed to:

- enhance the depth and breadth of practice in a multi-method, multi-level, and theoretically grounded perspective;
- refine and shape advanced practitioners through acquisition of professional competencies to assess, intervene, and evaluate within multiple systems and all practice environments;
- affirm that human problems derive from a complex interplay of psychological, social, cultural, economic, political, biological and physical forces;
- prepare students to effectively intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities;
- expand and enhance the foundation of generalist social work core competencies with advanced knowledge and practice behaviors;
- acquire advanced skills in leadership, collaboration, administration, advocacy, assessment, problem solving, intervention, cultural competency, communication, collaboration, community building, program evaluation, organizational management, policy analysis, and scientific inquiry.

The integration of professional practice skills within this curriculum model results in mastery of social work's core competencies. Advanced Generalist practitioners are proficient in a wide range of interventions, skills, roles, theories, systems and settings. The GVSU Social Work faculty authored knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective process and observable behaviors expected for Advanced Generalist social workers (see Appendix A).

D. MSW Study Options

The School of Social Work offers students several options for completing the MSW degree that include:

- Regular admission full-time: curriculum must be completed within 2 years
- Regular admission part-time: curriculum must be completed within 4 years
- Advanced standing full-time: curriculum must be completed within 3 consecutive semesters – summer entry only
- Advanced standing part-time: curriculum must be completed within 6 semesters – fall semester entry only

MSW students should check with their academic advisor for specific course requirements, options, and electives available to them as part of their course of study.

E. ADMISSION POLICIES FOR REGULAR MSW AND MSW ADVANCED STANDING

GVSU School of Social Work welcomes applications to the Master's program. There are distinct admission dates that guarantee review:

- **January 15** for all international students for full-time, "regular admission" to begin in the fall semester.
- **February 1** for students with a BSW applying for full-time, "advanced standing" to begin in the spring/summer semester.
- **March 15** for students with a BSW applying for part-time, "advanced standing" to begin in the fall semester.
- **March 15** for students applying for full-time, "regular admission" to begin in the fall semester.
- **March 15** for students applying for part-time, "regular admission" to begin in the fall semester.
- **October 1** for students applying for part-time, "regular admission" to begin in the winter semester.

[Applications](#) received after these dates are not guaranteed review. Applications for international students will not be reviewed after January 15th.

F. ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS FOR REGULAR STANDING M.S.W. DEGREE (All International and Non-BSW Applicants)

The School of Social Work offers a 60-credit-hour Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) degree program which can be completed on a full-time (two years) and part-time schedule (three or four years).

The MSW Regular Standing Program has seven requirements that all applicants must meet to be granted admission. These are:

- Submit a completed MSW Program application and a current resume;
- Have completed an undergraduate degree at an accredited institution of higher education;

- Provide official transcripts from each undergraduate and graduate institution previously attended;
- An overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in their undergraduate coursework. The University calculates the relevant GPA based on the applicant's last 60 credits;
- Provide evidence of a broad background in liberal education that reflects the satisfactory completion of a minimum of 18 credit hours in a combination of human biological, social, and behavioral science courses, with good representation in sociology, psychology, and/or social work;
- Three professional recommendations using the electronic GVSU MSW Admission Recommendation Form (sent to references by GVSU) from professionals (including academics) familiar with their qualifications for pursuing a graduate social work degree (including a field education supervisor or an individual in a comparable field education role if the student holds a BSW degree); and
- Write an essay answering the questions below. Typed response (limited to five pages or less than 2500 words).
 - What motivates you to pursue a master's degree in social work at this time?
 - The profession of social work is committed to social, political, and economic justice, the alleviation of poverty and oppression, and the reduction of social problems. Address a social problem about which you are particularly concerned. Concisely discuss your understanding of social, political, and economic justice. How do you think that you can advance the aforementioned? What experiences or factors have shaped your interest in advancing justice?
 - Describe some of your experiences and achievements in school, work (volunteering or employment), and in your personal life. Include a description of any barriers you have encountered in pursuing your education, work, or personal goals. Indicate the steps and strategies you have used, or are using, to overcome these barriers.
 - Describe examples and experiences that demonstrate you can work effectively with individuals and communities that represent diverse populations (including, but not limited to, people and communities reflecting diverse ethnicities, racial identities, abilities, socio-economic class, gender, or sexual orientations). Describe any difficulties you have encountered when working with any of the diverse groups mentioned above.

- Please describe your plans for completing the MSW program if you are admitted. For example, how do you plan to balance your work, education, and personal life? What supports are in place for you when you enter field placement?

G. REGULAR STANDING CONDITIONAL ADMISSION (Not available for Advanced Standing or International Students)

- Applicants, who do not earn a 3.0 GPA in their last 60 credits from bachelor level studies, may be considered for “Conditional Admission”. Individuals with a GPA between 2.75 and 2.99 as part of an application that demonstrates skillful writing and reflection, completion of 18 credits of social sciences and strong professional recommendations may be eligible for “Conditional Admission”. Conditional admission may also be granted if application review reveals a history of strong social work experience.
 - *GVSU School of Social Work **does not** grant SW course credit for life experiences or previous work experience.*
- The Director of the MSW Program will assign applicants eligible for conditional admission two GVSU MSW classes. Successful completion of the assigned classes is met by attaining a “B” or better in each class at which time the student is granted regular admission. Successfully completed class credits are recognized as part of degree completion.

H. ADVANCED STANDING M.S.W. DEGREE (For Applicants with a BSW)

The School of Social Work recognizes strong academic and professional performance by students who have graduated from a CSWE-accredited undergraduate social work program within eight years (preferred) prior to enrollment in the M.S.W. program and have met specified admissions criteria. Advanced standing students are exempt from the 22 credit hours of foundation courses and may accelerate their graduate study by completing the remaining 38 credit hours of MSW course requirements. The advanced standing M.S.W. program can be completed full-time (three semesters) or part-time (five semesters).

The School of Social Work recognizes strong academic and professional performance by students who have graduated from a Council of Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited undergraduate social work program within eight years prior to enrollment in the MSW program. Advanced standing students are exempt from the 22 hours of foundation courses and may accelerate their graduate study by completing the remaining

38 credit hours of MSW course requirements. Specific courses which are exempt include SW 600, SW 601, SW 603, SW 610, SW 620, SW690, SW 650 and SW 651.

Advanced standing admission is awarded only to graduates holding degrees from baccalaureate degree social work programs:

- Accredited by Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) or
- Recognized by its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or
- Covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.

The MSW Advanced Standing Program has six requirements that all applicants must meet to be granted admission. These are:

- Submit a completed MSW Program application and a current resume;
- Provide official transcripts from each undergraduate and graduate institution previously attended, including the transcript reflecting the award of a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited baccalaureate social work program;
- Three professional recommendations using the electronic GVSU MSW Admission Recommendation Form (sent to references by GVSU) from professionals (including academics) familiar with their qualifications for pursuing a graduate social work degree. One of the recommendations should be the applicant's BSW field supervisor or faculty field liaison;
- An overall GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in their undergraduate coursework. The University calculates the relevant GPA based on the applicant's last 60 credits;
- Demonstrate a 3.0* (on a 4-point scale) in each social work course; or a 3.5 GPA or better in social work courses overall with no major academic or behavioral concerns cited;
- Write an essay answering the questions below. Typed response (limited to five pages or less than 2500 words).
 - What motivates you to pursue a master's degree in social work at this time?
 - The profession of social work is committed to social, political, and economic justice, the alleviation of poverty and oppression, and

the reduction of social problems. Address a social problem about which you are particularly concerned. Concisely discuss your understanding of social, political, and economic justice. How do you think that you can advance the aforementioned? What experiences or factors have shaped your interest in advancing justice?

- Describe some of your experiences and achievements in school, work (volunteering or employment), and in your personal life. Include a description of any barriers you have encountered in pursuing your education, work, or personal goals. Indicate the steps and strategies you have used, or are using, to overcome these barriers.
- Describe examples and experiences that demonstrate you can work effectively with individuals and communities that represent diverse populations (including, but not limited to, people and communities reflecting diverse ethnicities, racial identities, abilities, socio-economic class, gender, or sexual orientations). Describe any difficulties you have encountered when working with any of the diverse groups mentioned above.
- Please describe your plans for completing the MSW program if you are admitted. For example, how do you plan to balance your work, education, and personal life? What supports are in place for you when you enter field placement?

*Advanced Standing admission is **NOT** guaranteed based on GPA or course grades. Applicants will not be considered for Advanced Standing status if their final 60 credit hour GPA (social work AND non-social work classes) is below 3.0, **OR** they do not meet the social work GPA requirement options noted above. The final decision on Advanced Standing admission also includes faculty review and evaluation of the quality of the essay response and professional recommendations. The University, College or School may, additionally, impose limitations in the number of available seats for incoming Advanced Standing students, or higher eligibility standards for Advanced Standing based upon a need to balance enrollment or other external factors.

I. APPLICANTS WHO HAVE A BSW BUT WHO DO NOT MEET ADVANCED STANDING REQUIREMENTS:

Applicants who have a BSW but do not meet the requirements for the Advanced Standing Program receive a waiver for equivalent generalist courses completed in their B.S.W. Program in which the student has earned a **B+ or better** and, in the case of Field Education and Seminar, earned Credit.

The generalist courses are:

SW 600 - Cultural Competency for Social Work;
SW 601 - Social Work Foundations;

SW 603 – Integrated Methods;
SW 610 – Social Welfare Policy and Services;
SW 620 - Human Behavior in the Social Environment;
SW 650 – Field Education I; SW 651 – Field Seminar I

This equivalency is determined through transcript, course description, and syllabus review, completed by the M.S.W. Director, upon admission. When two or more courses equate to the MSW generalist course, the grades achieved in those courses will be averaged and the average must be a **B+ or better** to waive the associated generalist course. The M.S.W. course will be waived; however, the credits required for graduation will not be waived, meaning the student must fulfill the 60 M.S.W. credits required for the Regular Standing Admission.

J. MSW AND MPA AS A SECOND DEGREE

The Schools of Social Work and the School of Community Leadership and Development offer prospective students the option to simultaneously pursue two graduate degrees offered by these units (Masters of Social Work and Masters of Public Administration). This entails taking coursework in both disciplines in order to be well prepared to seek middle and upper-level management positions in either public or private human service organizations. Those earning the two degrees will attain the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession with the advanced administrative and technical expertise developed through the study of public administration to become leaders in their organizations and communities. Currently, Grand Valley State University policies enable a student to pursue the M.S.W degree as the first master's degree and the M.P.A degree as a second master's degree by completing 21 credits in the M.P.A program.

M.S.W. AND M.P.A. REQUIREMENTS

For students who are not seeking or do not qualify for Advanced Standing, 78 credit hours of study are required. For Advanced Standing students, 59 credits are required. Students must be willing to take a minimum of two courses per semester, including spring/summer, and are expected to complete coursework within four calendar years. A three-semester field education practicum is required (two semesters for advanced standing) in which students will spend at least 400 hours time applying the knowledge learned in the classroom regarding administrative or macro practice. Students must complete a minimum of 21 credits of public administration courses along with the courses necessary to earn the M.S.W. degree.

No further action on candidacy will be taken until all requested materials have been received by the Admissions and Recruitment Office. Applications may be obtained through the university or either school. Completed application files will be reviewed by faculty members of the M.S.W program and the M.P.A program. Students must meet the basic requirements for graduate study as defined by each school. Either program may also request additional information from an applicant before granting full admissions status and a personal interview may be required.

Applicants must complete a graduate application for admission to both the M.S.W program and M.P.A program, following each program's admission policies outlined in the catalog:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/msw-mpa-combination-109.htm>

K. Application Review Process

The application review process begins only after **all** required admissions materials, references and transcripts are received by GVSU. Admissions procedures are governed by the SSW Faculty Admissions Committee procedures. This process may include an interview with one or more members of the faculty to allow for a more thorough understanding of the applicant's strengths and challenges.

If the applicant does not meet basic requirements for MSW program admission, they are required to submit, with their application materials, a Letter of Appeal with explanations clearly addressing their academic deficiencies.

Please see the GVSU School of Social Work website BSW and MSW program sites for application forms and further information:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/>

IV. BSW Program

A. BSW Program Mission and Goals

BSW Program Mission. The mission of the BSW Program is to prepare generalist social workers who enhance and promote well-being and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice of the citizens, organizations and communities of West Michigan, the state, the nation, and the world; and to further the goals of the University and of the social

work profession in this region and beyond. West Michigan's unique setting consists of diverse cultural communities as well as urban and rural settings, creating significant potential for skilled social work professionals to make a profound impact on our community.

BSW Program Goals: The four goals of the BSW Program are:

1. To provide a generalist social work curriculum in a high-quality learning environment that prepares BSW graduates for entry-level social work practice that promotes social, and economic justice and endeavors to address poverty and other social problems within organizational, individual, and community contexts within, but not limited to, West Michigan and the State of Michigan.
2. To prepare generalist social workers who exhibit a professional commitment to enhancing social justice, promoting human rights, ensuring the dignity and worth of all individuals, practicing social work with integrity, upholding the *NASW Code of Ethics*, incorporating diversity into their practice, and advancing the profession's reputation and knowledge base.
3. To prepare students for continued professional development opportunities throughout their careers, including graduate education.
4. To contribute to the development of social work scholarship and human rights advocacy by supporting the engagement of students, faculty and staff in local, regional, statewide, national and international organizations focused improving the quality of life for all persons.

B. Program Requirements

The BSW degree requires successful completion of 120 semester hours of college credits. The program is built on a liberal arts foundation plus 34 hours of cognate and international courses. These required courses augment, complement, and supplement the 45 credit hours of professional social work courses, which include emphases on social work values and ethics, social and economic justice, diversity, populations at risk, human behavior and social environment, social welfare policy and services, generalist social work practice, social work research, and practicum education practice sequences.

Students begin the BSW program in the Fall semester of their Junior year. The SSW admits students one time per year.

The Bachelor of Social Work degree program is a secondary

admission program which requires students to apply for admission to the program and to meet all admission criteria.

Criteria for admission to the BSW Program. Undergraduate freshmen and transfer students are admitted to Grand Valley State University (GVSU) through the Admissions Office which follows the policies and procedures described in the *GVSU Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog* sections “Admissions to Grand Valley” and “General Academic policies and Regulations”.

To be eligible for admission to the BSW Program as a BSW candidate, students must have:

- Completed all freshman and sophomore course requirements in the BSW curriculum,
- Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale);
- Have earned a minimum grade point average C or better and the cumulative grade point average for these courses must be 2.500 or above. These courses may be repeated no more than once: BIO 104; PLS 102; PSY 101; PSY 303 OR PSY 324; SOC 101, Social Problems/Social Inequality course.

Students must also demonstrate a MTH 110 proficiency and have completed their general education Foundations (excluding Mathematical Sciences); these requirements do not require C or better.

- Complete and submit a candidacy application, a professional resume, and a personal statement responding to questions posed by the end of January of their sophomore year.

These criteria are published in the University’s print and electronic catalog and on the School of Social Work website.

Transfer Students

A student planning to transfer to GVSU from another college or university should work closely with their local academic advisor. Transfer students work with the CECI Undergraduate Advising Center to carefully review their GVSU transcript evaluation upon admission to the university. To be considered for the Social Work program, a transfer student must be admitted to GVSU and have declared social work as a major prior to application. Transfer students are able to declare Social Work as their major at transfer orientation.

In conformity with the GVSU Admissions Policy, the BSW Program admits academically qualified students who have earned college credit from other two-year and/or four-year institutions. In compliance with the Michigan Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions

Officers' (MACRAO) Michigan Transfer Agreement (MTA), any student who has attended a two-year public institution in Michigan and officially completed the program requirements from that institution has fulfilled GVSU's foundation general education requirements. In addition to the general education foundation requirements, all students must complete two courses with the cultural designations sequence, as well as two junior and senior level issues courses.

Every student must also complete 58 credits from a four-year school and complete their last 30 credit hours at GVSU to earn the GVSU BSW degree.

When evaluating students' eligibility for admission to GVSU, the Registrar's Office reviews their academic record and evaluates previous coursework. To accomplish this, the Registrar's Office has compiled a list of courses at other Michigan institutions and has worked with departments across the university to identify Grand Valley equivalencies. The specific list of social work equivalencies was developed in consultation with the BSW Program Director. BSW degree credit is awarded only for courses designated as equivalent and delivered by a CSWE-accredited program, with the exception of SW 150 Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare.

When a course equivalency evaluation does not exist, typically from out-of-state institutions, the Registrar's Office seeks a course description for the course in question and facilitates an evaluation of the course with the appropriate GVSU academic department. If a syllabus is needed by the department, the Registrar's Office requests the student provide that document. If the course in question is a social work course, the former school's catalog, copy of the syllabus, and any other verifying information is sent to the BSW Program Director who determines whether the course is awarded equivalent or elective credit.

To facilitate the transfer of credits and avoid duplication, specific courses are occasionally substituted for BSW admission requirements. For example, students from active catalog years from 2017 are required to take Biology 104: *Biology for the 21st Century*, *BIO 120 General Biology* or *BMS 292 Anatomy and Physiology*. Other schools have a range of biology courses and in many instances, there is not a specific course that the Registrar's Office and the Biology Department identify as equivalent to these courses. In consultation with the Biology Department, the BSW Program often accepts a biology course equivalent to GVSU's above listed courses to satisfy this requirement. All requests for substitutions are forwarded from the BSW academic advisor to the BSW Program Director for review. Decisions on course equivalency are shared with the CECI Undergraduate Advising Center and the faculty mentor for use in student advisement.

The BSW Student Handbook: Policies, Practices, and Procedures summarizes the transfer of credits for the BSW Program as follows:

- With the exception of SW 150, only credits earned in a CSWE-accredited BSW program can be transferred as equivalent to GVSU BSW Program courses. Course waivers are issued to eliminate needless duplication, and to enhance student learning, but not to circumvent policies, practices and standards, established by the CSWE, the University, and the BSW Program.
- BSW students must have earned the minimum grade of B- in the social work course for which transfer credit is requested.
- Despite the award of transfer credits, students must meet all BSW degree requirements described in the GVSU catalog.
- Credit is never granted by the BSW Program for Field Practicum in Social Work SW 490-493 or Senior Seminar in Social Work (Capstone) SW 495.

Required Courses in the Major

The student must earn an overall GPA of 3.0 in social work courses and not have repeated a course more than once. Also included are six credits from the list of social work electives, as well as three credits from the list of international program courses. Please see the catalog for detailed list of course options.

- [SW 150 – Introduction to Social Work and Social Welfare](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 300 - Social Work and Difference, Diversity and Privilege](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 316 - Interviewing in Social Work](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 317 - Generalist Practice I](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 318 - Generalist Practice II](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 319 - Social Welfare Policy and Services](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 340 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment I](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 341 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment II](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 348 - Professional Development in Social Work](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 430 - Social Work Research](#) Credits: 4
- [SW 490 - Social Work Field Education I](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 491 - Social Work Field Education II](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 492 - Social Work Field Seminar I](#) Credits: 1
- [SW 493 - Social Work Field Seminar II](#) Credits: 1
- [SW 495 - Social Work Capstone](#) Credits: 3

Courses Required Prior to Second Year of Social Work Program

The following required courses must be completed by the student before starting field education:

- Culture and environment elective Credits: 3
- [STA 215 - Introductory Applied Statistics](#) Credits: 3

Courses Required Prior to Graduation:

The following courses must be completed prior to graduating with their BSW:

- Interprofessional practice elective Credits: 3
- Social Work electives Credits: 6
- International relations elective Credits: 3

C. Admission

All undergraduate social work majors must formally apply to the School of Social Work prior to their junior year. Application materials may be found on the SSW website.

Students who wish to major in social work must have a minimum overall grade point average of 2.5. A minimum overall average of 3.0 in major courses is required for continuation in the School of Social Work.

D. BSW Candidacy

The School's BSW Candidacy admission procedures are administered by the BSW Program Director and other assigned faculty. Social work majors are encouraged to work with the College of Education and Community Innovation (CECI) Undergraduate Advising Center to ensure that all academic requirements are in place for Candidacy. BSW Students are also encouraged to seek advisement from the BSW Program Director or other assigned faculty mentors.

1. The complete Application for Candidacy for the BSW Degree is reviewed by the BSW Program Director and/or BSW faculty.
2. The BSW Program Director and/or the faculty committee, may, at their discretion, award candidacy, award conditional candidacy, deny candidacy, defer candidacy, request additional information or require a personal interview.
3. The BSW Program Director reports BSW admission decisions to the Director of the School of Social Work.
4. Applicants are notified of candidacy decision within 4 weeks of the application deadline.
5. Any applicant denied candidacy may appeal the decision in writing to the Director of the School of Social Work within seven (7) days of notification of denial of candidacy, with specific reasons they are

appealing the decision.

Accepted applicants are regarded as candidates for the BSW degree, while those who are not accepted are referred to the GVSU or CECI Advising Center for counseling regarding alternative majors to consider. Candidate for the BSW degree must maintain a 3.0 cumulative average in all social work courses.

To be eligible for Candidacy students must complete all admission prerequisite courses with a C or better and the cumulative grade point average for these courses must a 2.50 or above. These courses may be repeated no more than once.

Social Problems/Social Inequality elective Credits: 3

- * [BIO 104 - Biology for the 21st Century](#) OR [BIO 120 General Biology](#) OR [BMS 202 Anatomy and Physiology](#) Credits: 4
- [PLS 102 - American Government and Politics](#) Credits: 3
- [PSY 101 - Introductory Psychology](#) Credits: 3
- [PSY 303 - Psychopathology](#) Credits: 3
- OR [PSY 324 - Developmental Psychopathology](#) Credits: 3
- [SOC 101 - Introduction to Sociology](#) Credits: 3
- [SW 150 Introduction of Social Work and Social Welfare](#) Credits: 3

*BIO 104 is the recommended Life Science choice for social work majors.

Students must also demonstrate a MTH 110 proficiency and have completed their general education Foundations (excluding Mathematical Sciences); these requirements do not require C or better.

NOTE: Grades earned at another institution in these courses will be considered for admission into the SSW and must meet the grade and repeat criteria indicated above.

Please review the College of Education and Community Innovation (CECI) Advising Center website and secure advising on course requirements, sequencing, pre-requisites and assistance with troubleshooting:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ceciadvising/>

V. Practicum [Field] Education

A. Philosophy

In keeping with the most recent practice standards as outlined by the

Council of Social Work Education, the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work recognizes the centrality of practicum education curriculum in addressing both foundational and advanced practice competencies at the BSW and MSW level, respectively.

The practicum education curriculum provides students with an experiential and imitative learning opportunity to explore and use social work ideas, concepts and behaviors encountered in the classroom. These learning opportunities are designed to develop further professional social work identity, self-reflection and self-awareness, and competence in each student. In each semester of practicum placement, students develop concrete and measurable learning activities that address specific observable behaviors using the learning contract and evaluation tool. The development and monitoring of these activities requires the collaboration of the student, the agency-based practicum supervisor and the university-based faculty liaison. This model of collaborative, competency-based practicum education is implemented at both the BSW and MSW level.

The guided seminar coursework provides additional emphasis on the integration of coursework into the practicum placement, allowing students to actively reflect on the connection between classroom theory and agency application. Furthering the centrality and integrative nature of the practicum experience is the use of tenure and tenure-track faculty actively engaged in teaching. Faculty ensures the reciprocal nature of the practicum placement on courses and the field experience.

The School of Social Work is responsible for developing supervised student practice opportunities that allow for this integration of competencies and coursework in our communities. The practicum office is responsible for monitoring and reporting on aggregate student progress in practice so as to affect the development of a curriculum that more fully prepares students for the realities of competent day-to-day practice.

Practicum faculty work closely with Directors of the BSW and MSW programs to review student preparation in courses and provide ongoing feedback regarding student and practicum supervisor progress in attainment of the 9 competencies.

For further information on all policies and procedures related to BSW and MSW practicum education, please read the **GVSU School of Social Work Field Education Manual**, available on the School of Social Work website (MSW): <https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/msw-field-education-and-forms-124.htm> and (BSW): <https://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/bsw-field->

[education-and-forms-68.htm](#).

Note: Any MSW students who fail to maintain a 3.00 GPA while in their field practice will receive an academic review and be suspended from their field practice for one year. Students who are suspended from field for one year may be subject to dismissal if their GPA has not improved above a 3.00.

VI. Student Information

A. Disability Support Resources (DSR)

Grand Valley State University (GVSU) is committed to providing access to programs and facilities for all students, faculty and staff. GVSU promotes the inclusion of individuals with disabilities as part of our commitment to creating a diverse, intercultural community. It is the policy of GVSU to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act as amended by the ADA Amendment Act (2008), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and other applicable federal and state laws that prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability. GVSU will provide reasonable accommodations to qualified individuals with disabilities upon request.

For further information, please see the GVSU link to the DSR website at:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/dsr/index.cfm?id=6B84986F-C11E-96EE-2FBFBC8B49433A21>

B. Student Organizations

The SSW supports the on-going activities of the Bachelor of Social Work student organization (BSWSO) and Master of Social Work student organization (MSWSO).

To learn more or become a member go to:

<https://www.gvsu.edu/studentorg/>

Additionally, qualified students will be invited to join the Phi Alpha honor society. *Phi Alpha Honor Society* is a national social work academic honor society that is dedicated to high standards of scholarship and distinctive achievements within social work. The purposes of Phi Alpha Honor Society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. *Phi Alpha Chi Epsilon*, the Grand Valley State University (GVSU) chapter, offers membership to **BSW** and **MSW** students to be inducted based on your academic achievement and

credit hours spent within the social work program.
<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/phi-alpha-honor-society-42.htm>

C. GVSU SSW ListServ

The GVSU School of Social Work listserv/news group is intended as a way of furthering communication on topics relevant to social work, specific to the GVSU School of Social Work. The purpose of it is to share general announcements with social work students and alumni. Students are not automatically subscribed to the listserv, they must request to subscribe. The listserv is one of several methods of communication used by the GVSU School of Social Work for general announcements.

Although information is regularly distributed via the listserv, subscribers are under no obligation to respond to or participate in anything that is posted. Subscribers are encouraged to complete their own research of an opportunity that interests them.

Postings on the listserv do not suggest the opinion of or an endorsement by the School of Social Work.

TO SUBSCRIBE:

1. Compose message to: gvsussw+subscribe@mail.gvsu.edu from the email address you wish to receive messages
2. Leave the subject and body of the message blank
3. Hit send
4. You will receive an email "Join request for GVSUSSW" in the subject line
5. Open the email and click "Join This Group"
6. A welcome message will be emailed confirming you have been added to the group

MSW/BSW students and GVSU SSW alumni may send a message through the GVSU SSW listserv as long as they are a subscriber to the GVSU SSW listserv. Messages are moderated, thus make sure your message aligns with the NASW Code of Ethics and conforms to the following community guidelines:

1. Identify yourself in the message with your first and last name. No one can post to the listserv unless they are subscribed to it.
2. Sources of spams, flames, profanity, abusive advertising and typically irrelevant content posted to the listserv will be moderated and subscribers may have their use or privileges revoked at the discretion of the list owner.
3. Your message should fall under one of the following categories. Use one

of the categories as your subject line:

- Job posting
 - Volunteer opportunity
 - School of Social Work announcement (e.g. Field Education, Scholarships, GA positions, recruitment for volunteers, recruitment for research participants, SSW events, BSWSO, MSWSO, Phi Alpha, Study Abroad trips)
 - GVSU announcement (e.g. Events happening at GVSU)
 - Professional Organization announcement: (e.g. Events happening outside of GVSU)
4. Please keep your message brief. The listserv automatically rejects messages that are too long. Please submit your post to the listserv using plain text only and not in HTML or “rich text formats.”
 5. Please keep your message to the GVSU SSW listserv confined to general announcements as outlined above.
 6. Please do not send commercial advertisements or items for sale to the listserv, except for the case of fundraising by Social Work student groups.
 7. When responding to a message, reply to the individual who sent the original message, rather than sending your message to the entire listserv.
 8. When you send a message through the GVSU SSW listserv, it will reach over 2,000 subscribers which includes GVSU BSW and MSW students, as well as GVSU SSW faculty and staff and GVSU SSW alumni.

How do I send a message through the GVSU SSW listserv?

Compose your message to: gvsussw@mail.gvsu.edu Use one of the categories identified above as your subject line.

TO UNSUBSCRIBE:

1. Compose message to: gvsussw+unsubscribe@mail.gvsu.edu
2. Leave the subject and body of the message blank
3. Hit send

D. Scholarships

The School of Social Work has several scholarships for social work students. Applications are due each year by April 1st. See the scholarships here:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/school-of-social-work-scholarships-35.htm>

E. Financial Aid

The GVSU School of Social Work does not handle financial aid for students other than the scholarships offered above. For a full review of all information and policies related to financial cost and aid, please

contact GVSU Financial Aid at:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/financialaid/>

F. Graduate Assistantships

A Graduate Assistantship (GA) is a work opportunity that programs and units at Grand Valley State University offer to graduate students. For more information please consult the Graduate School website:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/gs/graduate-assistships-student-information-and-resources-11.htm>

The School of Social Work also offers Graduate Assistantship (GA) opportunities each year. The SSW listserv will announce deadlines for applications each year.

G. Grand Valley State University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs

For the most up-to-date information regarding class scheduling for BSW and MSW courses, please check the online GVSU catalog.

www.gvsu.edu/catalog

H. Campus Health Services

<http://www.gvsu.edu/campushealth/>

I. Department of Public Safety

<http://www.gvsu.edu/publicsafety/>

J. Career Services

<http://www.gvsu.edu/careers/>

K. Counseling

<http://www.gvsu.edu/counsel/>

L. Writing Center

Undergraduate <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc/>

Graduate: <https://www.gvsu.edu/wc/graduate-student-services-100.htm>

M. Council of Social Work Education [Accreditation]

<http://www.cswe.org/>

- **N. Michigan SW Licensing**

<http://www.gvsu.edu/ssw/supervision-39.htm>

- **O. National Association of Social Workers**

<http://www.socialworkers.org/>

Appendix A

2022 GVSU Competencies for Generalists

-From the Educational Policies and Standards (EPAS) authored by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), with additions from GVSU SSW. The following competency language is utilized for the entire BSW Program and MSW foundational courses (SW 600, SW 601, SW 603, SW 610, SW 620 and SW 690)

Appendix B

2022 GVSU Social Work Competencies for Advanced Generalists

Authored by the Grand Valley State University School of Social Work Faculty. The following competency language is utilized for the MSW Advanced Generalist courses (everything beyond the foundational level courses)

Appendix C

The Ten Professional Abilities and Definitions (Wisconsin-Madison, 1995) are:

1. Commitment to Learning

The ability to self-assess, self-correct and self-direct; to identify needs and sources of learning; and to continually seek new knowledge and understanding.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Identifies priorities
- Formulates appropriate questions
- Identifies and locates appropriate resources
- Demonstrates a positive attitude (motivation) toward learning
- Offers own thoughts and ideas
- Identifies need for further information

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Prioritizes information needs
- Analyzes and subdivides large questions into components
- Seeks out professional literature
- Sets personal and professional goals
- Identifies own learning needs based on previous experiences
- Plans and presents an in-service, or research or case studies
- Welcomes and/or seeks new learning opportunities

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Applies new information and re-evaluates performance
- Accepts that there may be more than one answer to a problem
- Recognizes the need and is able to provide rationale for potential solutions to problems
- Reads articles critically and understands limits of application to professional practice
- Researches and studies areas where knowledge base is lacking

2. Interpersonal Skills

The ability to interact effectively with patients, families, colleagues, other professionals and the community: to deal effectively with cultural and ethnic diversity issues.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Maintains professional demeanor in all classroom and clinical interactions
- Demonstrates interest in patients as individuals
- Respects cultural and personal differences of others; is non-judgmental about clients' lifestyles
- Communicates with others in a respectful, confident manner
- Respects personal space of client's and others
- Maintains confidentiality in all clinical interactions
- Demonstrates acceptance of limited knowledge and experience

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Recognizes impact of non-verbal communication and modifies accordingly
- Assumes responsibility for own actions
- Motivates others to achieve
- Establishes trust
- Seeks to gain knowledge and input from others
- Respects role of support staff

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Listens to client but reflects back to original concern
- Works effectively with challenging clients
- Responds effectively to unexpected experiences
- Talks about difficult issues with sensitivity and objectivity
- Delegates to others as needed
- Approaches others to discuss differences in opinion
- Accommodates differences in learning styles

3. Communication Skills

The ability to communicate effectively (i.e., speaking, body language, reading, writing and listening) for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Demonstrates understanding of basic English (verbal and written): uses correct grammar, accurate spelling and expression
- Writes legibly

- Recognizes impact of non-verbal communication: maintains appropriate eye contact, listens actively

Developing Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Utilizes non-verbal communication to augment verbal message
- Restates, reflects and clarifies message
- Collects necessary information from the client interview
- Given feedback, produces organized written messages

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding level)

- Modifies communication (verbal and written) to meet the needs of different audiences
- Presents verbal or written message with logical organization and sequencing
- Maintains open and constructive communication
- Utilizes communication technology effectively
- Dictates clearly and concisely

4. Effective Use of Time/Resources

The ability to obtain the maximum benefit from a minimum investment of time and resources.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Focuses on tasks at hand without dwelling on past mistakes
- Recognizes own resource limitations
- Uses existing resources effectively
- Uses unscheduled time efficiently
- Completes assignments in timely fashion

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Sets up own schedule
- Coordinates schedule with others
- Demonstrates flexibility
- Plans ahead

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding level)

- Sets priorities, reorganizes as needed and has ability to say “No”
- Considers client’s goals in context
- Performs multiple tasks simultaneously and delegates when appropriate
- Uses scheduled time with each patient efficiently

5. Use of Constructive Feedback

The ability to identify sources of and seek out feedback and to effectively use and provide feedback for improving personal interaction.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Demonstrates active listening skills
- Demonstrates a positive attitude (openness) toward feedback
- Critiques own performance
- Maintains two-way communication

Developing level (builds on preceding level)

- Assesses own performance accurately
- Utilizes feedback when establishing goals
- Provides constructive and timely feedback
- Develops plan of action in response to feedback

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Seeks feedback from others
- Modifies feedback given to others according to their learning styles
- Manages differences of opinions with sensitivity
- Considers multiple approaches when responding to feedback
- Utilizes self-assessment for development and learning

6. Problem-Solving

The ability to recognize and define problems, analyze data, develop and implement solutions and evaluate outcomes.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Recognizes problems
- States problems clearly
- Describes known solutions to problem
- Identifies resources needed to develop solutions
- Begins to examine multiple solutions to problems

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Prioritizes problems
- Identifies contributors to problems
- Considers consequences of possible solutions

- Consults with others to clarify problem_

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Implements actions leading to solutions
- Reassesses action plans
- Evaluates outcomes
- Updates problem-solving strategies with current research
- Recognizes need for continuous quality improvement

7. Professionalism

The ability to exhibit appropriate professional conduct and to represent the profession effectively.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Knows the NASW Code of Ethics
- Demonstrates awareness of state licensure regulations
- Abides by facility policies and procedures
- Projects professional image
- Attends professional meetings
- Demonstrates honesty, compassion, courage and continuous regard for all

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Abides by NASW Code of Ethics
- Abides by state licensure regulations
- Identifies positive professional role models
- Discusses societal expectations of the profession
- Acts on moral commitment
- Involves other health care professionals in decision-making
- Seeks informed consent from patients_

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Demonstrates accountability for professional decisions
- Treats patients within scope of expertise
- Discusses role of social work in health care
- Keeps client as priority

8. Responsibility

The ability to fulfill commitments and to be accountable for actions and outcomes.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Demonstrates dependability
- Demonstrates punctuality
- Follows through on commitments
- Recognizes own limits

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Accepts responsibility for actions and outcomes
- Provides safe and secure environment for clients
- Offers and accepts help
- Completes projects without prompting
- Budgets time wisely

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Directs clients to other professionals when needed
- Delegates as needed
- Encourages client accountability

9. Critical Thinking

The ability to questions logically; to identify, generate, and evaluate elements of logical argument; to recognize and differentiate facts, illusions, assumptions, and hidden assumptions; and to distinguish the relevant from the irrelevant.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Raises relevant questions
- Considers all available information
- States the results of scientific literature
- Recognizes “gaps” in knowledge base
- Articulates ideas

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Feels challenged to examine ideas
- Understands scientific method
- Formulates new ideas
- Seeks alternative ideas
- Formulates alternative hypotheses
- Critiques hypotheses and ideas

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Exhibits openness to contradictory ideas
- Assesses issues raised by contradictory ideas
- Justifies methods selected
- Determines effectiveness of theoretical and applied methods
- Recognizes own biases and suspends personal judgment
- Encourages others to think critically

10. Stress Management

The ability to identify sources of stress and to develop effective coping behaviors.

Behavioral Criteria

Beginning Level

- Recognizes own stressors or problems
- Recognizes distress or problems in others
- Seeks assistance as needed
- Maintains professional demeanor in all situations

Developing Level (builds on preceding level)

- Maintains balance between professional and personal life
- Demonstrates effective affective responses in all situations
- Manages feedback (+/-) appropriately
- Establishes outlets to manage stressors

Professional Entry Level (builds on preceding levels)

- Prioritizes multiple commitments
- Responds calmly to urgent situations
- Recognizes and tolerates ambiguities in the social environment

Adapted and developed as Generic Abilities by the Physical Therapy Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison (1995). *Journal of Physical Therapy Education* 9(1).