

University of North Carolina Wilmington

Master of Social Work

STUDENT HANDBOOK

School of Social Work

2018-2019

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I. INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL INFORMATION

Program Description

The MSW Program in the School of Social Work at the University of North Carolina Wilmington began its unique, clinically-focused program in August 2005. This program prepares students to provide services to clients from various social systems (individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations and communities) with a variety of concerns and situations. Students learn about the history of social work practice, the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics and how to apply the Code, social policies that affect clients and workers, human developmental theory as it relates to bio-psycho-social-spiritual development, research methods to determine service effectiveness, and the organizational context of social work services. As part of the curriculum, all students complete an internship in one agency and are supervised in their work with clients. Clinical social workers work in a wide variety of human service settings, including mental health, schools, substance abuse treatment, family services, and private practice.

Mission and Goals

The MSW Program, as it strives to create an innovative clinical degree, is consistent with the CSWE Standards and Educational Policies, the UNCW Mission, and the mission of the College of Health and Human Services. Examination of the UNCW Mission indicates congruency between the MSW Program's mission and the UNCW mission. The UNCW Catalogue reveals a university mission that reads:

The University of North Carolina Wilmington, the state's coastal university, is dedicated to learning through the integration of teaching and mentoring with research and service. Our powerful academic experience stimulates creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship in an array of high-quality programs at the baccalaureate and master's levels, and in our doctoral programs in marine biology and educational leadership. Substantial research activity, combined with our hallmark teaching excellence and moderate size, advances distinctive student involvement in faculty scholarship. We are committed to diversity and inclusion, affordable access, global perspectives, and enriching the quality of life through scholarly community engagement in such areas as health, education, the economy, the environment, marine and coastal issues, and the arts.

(retrieved 8/27/15 from <http://uncw.edu/aboutuncw/mission.html>)

Likewise, the College of Health and Human Services' mission states:

We create transformative learning experiences, advance knowledge through research and scholarly activity, and engage local and global communities.

To accomplish our mission we are committed to:

- *Collaboration*
- *Empowerment*
- *Innovation*
- *Passion*
- *Social Responsibility*
- *Sustainability*
- *Vitality*

(retrieved 8/27/18 from <http://uncw.edu/chhs/about.html>)

Together these mission statements support the development of quality professional education that fosters close partnerships between the professions and the community to serve the public. This mission is achieved through the integration of teaching and mentoring with a commitment to diversity and inclusion. Hence the university focus creates a supportive environment for the School of Social Work, fostering a mission statement to enhance quality professional social work education. To this end, the **Mission for the School of Social Work** reads:

The School of Social Work is dedicated to a course of study and professional preparation that educates students, pursues scholarly inquiry, and performs community service in order to promote a strengths approach to social work practice. Such an approach teaches students practice skills that advance the empowerment and well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities as they explore policies and programs to ensure social welfare and quality social work practice.

(retrieved 8/30/18 from <https://uncw.edu/chhs/swk/about/vision-mission.html>)

And finally the mission for graduate social work education focuses the **Mission of the MSW Program** to read as follows:

The MSW Program is committed to the preparation of graduates for a career in clinical practice dedicated to assisting individuals, groups, families, and communities. While promoting equality and social and economic justice, faculty will prepare graduates for practice in a culturally diverse society, upholding the values and ethics of the profession and teaching critical thinking skills designed to enhance the quality of life for all persons.

(retrieved 7/30/15 from <http://uncw.edu/swk/programs.html>)

The MSW Program prepares students academically and professionally to be in tune with current demands and expectations of the professional labor market for MSW level social workers. The program has a history of taking special care in relationships with public and private social services organizations that emphasize faculty involvement in professional and service organizations, as well as academic associations. To this end, social work faculty members have been selected on the basis of an ability to contribute to our instructional program and the various components of our curriculum, and are expected to contribute to professional knowledge and development through research, publication, presentation, consultation, and outreach.

Thus the MSW Program, within the School of Social Work, articulates a commitment to scholarly inquiry and dedication to community service while pursuing skills in clinical practice. Such a commitment necessitates an educational focus congruent with the Council on Social Work Education.

The goals of the UNCW MSW Program are to teach each student to:

1. Identify as a professional social worker and complete a professional internship in clinical practice while utilizing supervision and consultation appropriately.
2. Apply social work values and ethical principles to guide professional practice.
3. Apply critical thinking skills to inform and communicate professional judgments and perceptions.
4. Explore the needs of and engage with diverse populations, identifying the appropriate use of different practice approaches.
5. Advance human rights and explore social and economic justice to enhance resiliency of diverse populations.
6. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to engage in strengths-based practice and policy.
7. Demonstrate effective skills for engaging, assessing, planning interventions, and evaluating practice with client systems of all sizes (individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities), drawing on the strengths-based perspective.
8. Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
9. Demonstrate the ability to respond to contexts that shape practice, including a variety of systems and their impact on client systems.
10. Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being to deliver effective social work services.

The program has also developed specific program objectives for each year of the two-year program, three-year program, and the advanced standing program. These objectives detail the specific learning outcomes for students when they complete the year, and are available in the MSW Field Education Manual.

Accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education

The MSW Program at UNCW is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting organization for all social work education programs across the country.

Consistent with the requirements for accreditation by CSWE, the School of Social Work does not offer academic credit for life experience.

Role of the MSW Program Coordinator

The MSW Program Coordinator has the responsibility to oversee and coordinate the MSW program for the School of Social Work. The Coordinator is also the primary liaison with the UNCW Graduate School. The Coordinator handles the admission process for the School, with the support of a faculty admissions committee, and assigns all Teaching Assistantships. S/he develops an orientation for entering MSW students and informs them about the program. S/he arranges for training for new TAs and monitors their performance during the year.

Graduate students should talk to the MSW Program Coordinator if they have questions about the program, issues or concerns about classes, or any other relevant concern about the program. The MSW Coordinator develops a procedure to evaluate the efficacy of the MSW program, and may periodically convene meetings of all MSW students and/or send out questionnaires to get feedback from students about their experience.

II. PROCEDURES AND POLICIES OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Admission Procedures

The MSW program adheres to the admissions requirements and processes of the UNCW Graduate School. The admission process is as follows: Applicants must submit the university admission form, transcript of their undergraduate work, GRE scores (if the applicant does not qualify for a waiver), three professional or academic references, and their written narrative electronically to the Graduate School by midnight February 1 of each year. The GRE score takes about one month to arrive at the Graduate School; therefore, it is advised that it is taken in November or December. The MSW Coordinator and faculty admissions committee evaluate all applications, and admit students with the greatest potential for success in the UNCW program. Admission decisions are transmitted to the Graduate School; applicants will be informed of their admission or rejection by both the School of Social Work and the Graduate School.

Students admitted to the UNCW master's programs must have a bachelor's degree from an accredited university with a 3.0 grade point average. Students may be admitted with lower GPA's under provisional status, which must be reviewed after the first semester. If a provisional student achieves a GPA of 3.0 or higher in the first semester of the MSW program, the MSW Coordinator recommends to the Graduate School that the student have regular admission status. Students without sufficient undergraduate backgrounds may also be admitted to the program. In this case, their admission letter identifies their specific deficiencies and how they must be addressed.

Financial Assistance for Graduate Education

There are limited sources of funding for graduate education. The university Financial Aid office has a listing of scholarships and loans that are available to graduate students; please see their webpage or talk to the liaison for graduate students at (910) 962-3177. The Graduate School also has a number of scholarships that are awarded; information can be found on the Graduate School webpage. In addition, the School of Social Work awards a limited number of teaching assistantships to each in-coming class of MSW students.

Graduate Assistantships

The School awards a limited number of assistantships to entering students in the fall semester of each year. In exchange for 10 hours of work per week for a faculty member during each semester, the student receives payment each semester (dependent on University funds available). The School may also have an out-of-state tuition remission to award each year. The MSW Coordinator awards graduate assistantships and tuition remissions to incoming students who express an interest in this financial support based on their admissions qualifications.

Each faculty member working with a TA has discretion as to the types of activities and assignments that s/he requires of the student. Faculty members also have discretion as to how to assure that the student is meeting her/his time obligation.

Graduate Assistant FAQs and Guidelines

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK GA/TA FAQs

(Approved 08/30/2018)

What is a GA?

A graduate assistant (GA) is a graduate student hired on a part-time basis to assist faculty members (who are the GA's supervisor) with their teaching, research, and scholarship. Graduate assistantships are a way of supporting the teaching and research mission of the university and school while providing financial assistance and support for the professional growth and development of graduate students.

How are GAs funded?

GAs are funded by the UNCW Graduate School and the School of Social Work. There are work-related requirements for all GAs.

Can GAs apply and receive financial awards or stipends from external sources and/or from other funded projects within the school or university?

Yes, but some of these may affect the status of the GA. GAs are only allowed to work the maximum of 29 hours per week. For example, a GA can work 10 hours at the School of Social Work and work the remaining 19 hours in another department. However, please be sure to consult the MSW Coordinator to determine how any additional funding or financial awards might affect your GA **before** seeking or accepting such support.

How are GAs matched to faculty member?

The MSW coordinator receives requests from faculty members, examines the interests and skills of GAs and then makes the best match possible. A GA may be assigned to split his/her time between 2 or more faculty members.

How do faculty members request GAs?

Faculty members request a GA by the deadline and method provided by the MSW Coordinator prior to the beginning of classes in the fall. Late requests are not accepted since work assignments are made immediately so that work can begin when classes begin in the fall semester.

Do some faculty members have priority in receiving a GA?

Priority is given to those faculty members with ongoing research and/or teaching projects. Pre-tenure faculty members and those who have not recently been assigned a GA may also be given priority. Faculty members must request a GA to have one assigned to them. Some GAs are also assigned to faculty or administrators outside of the School of Social Work.

How many GA positions are typically available?

The numbers vary depending on the size of the incoming cohort, the retention/carry over number of second year students, and of course, the availability of support.

What do GAs typically do?

GAs are part of the school's teaching and research infrastructure—thus the major functions involve teaching, research, and scholarship support for faculty members. For research, GAs typically conduct literature searches, assist in manuscript preparation, grant development and proposal writing. They may also be involved in the preparation of IRB applications, data collection or management, or some other aspect of research planning and coordination. For teaching, GAs can help the faculty perform tasks that are related to the courses outside and inside the classroom. It is not recommended that GAs grade any assignments turned in by their peers. Previous GAs have conducted focus groups, interviewed subjects, helped create surveys, SPSS databases, built citation lists using RefWorks, written annotated bibliographies, and obtained hard copies of books and articles, for example. Some faculty members use GAs in their research and scholarship activities related to teaching, curriculum and program administration.

What kind of skill level is required?

The level of skill needed by the GA to perform the task varies with requests (e.g., interviewing skills, computer application or other technological skills, literature or other search skills, literature review writing skills, data entry or analysis, focus group facilitation). Sometimes the desired skill level wanted by the faculty member does not match the available skill sets of GAs and we make the best match possible in those cases.

Where and when do GAs work?

Typically GAs do computer-related work from the student lounge, their homes, or at the library. It is not unusual, however, for GAs to be called on to visit agencies or other departments, as called for by the task of a specific project. GAs are generally expected to manage and schedule their own work hours, in concert with their supervisors, when not needed for project-related appointments or meetings. The GA's supervisor is expected to monitor hours and daily responsibilities of their assigned GA.

Can GAs be expected to travel?

Sometimes local travel is required. GAs will be reimbursed at the current state rate. GAs who travel need to contact the MSW Coordinator to complete travel authorization. In cases of regional or national travel, the supervisor would seek initial authorization and later reimbursement from the school. Approval is needed before any travel can take place.

What about other expenses?

GAs are not responsible for any personal outlay of money at any time. Supervisors must provide GAs with the resources needed to carry out work. This would include supplies or money for off-site photocopying or other expenses related to material acquisition.

Are there certain activities that GAs should not be expected to do?

GAs can help the faculty with their teaching activities. This may include, but is not limited to, co-teaching, or grading papers or tests. GAs would not meet with students around their status in the class. Other activities that are not acceptable for GAs include doing personal errands, representing their supervisor on school and university committees, attending community meetings that are not related to teaching, research or scholarship, and doing administrative work that is not related to teaching, research or scholarship.

When do GA work assignments begin and end each semester?

GA contracts are 9 months from the beginning of the school year in mid-August through the end of the spring semester the following year. GAs follow the University academic calendar and are provided time off for holidays and breaks when the University is closed.

How is GA time assigned, reported and supervised?

The faculty member(s) to whom the GA is assigned is/are the primary supervisor(s). The supervisor is responsible for assigning sufficient and appropriate work to fill the hours of obligated time and giving on-going feedback via email and in-person meetings about the nature of the work and its consistency with expectations.

It is the responsibility of both the supervisor and the GA to ensure that the time commitment is fulfilled. Although the overall semester time commitment is based on 10 hours a week of GA time, the supervisor may or may not allow some variation to the 10 hours a week work schedule. For example, a supervisor may allow a GA to work 15 hours one week and 5 the next in a special circumstance, for example, illness or due to some research-related deadlines. The banking of hours, which introduces serious inequity of workload among GAs and misses the intent of providing consistent, available research support to faculty members, is not permitted.

If there are times in the semester when a supervisor does not have enough work for the required time for his/her GA hours, that supervisor should notify the MSW coordinator so that the GA can be temporarily re-assigned. Similarly, if a faculty member has GA assignments in excess of what his/her GA can do, the MSW coordinator should be notified to help find additional GA time.

GAs are required to maintain an accurate time record of their work and activities devoted to GA assignments. Further instructions for keeping and submitting time record is provided at the GA orientation.

The MSW coordinator provides oversight to clocked hours and is available to mediate any difficulties. All expected GA hours need to be accounted for at the end of each semester.

Will the GA's assignment continue into spring and summer?

GAs are assigned for the entire academic year (fall and spring) with one caveat: The coordinator of the MSW program reserves the right to reassign the GA if she or he is underutilized, used in ways inconsistent with the initial request, or used in ways that are inconsistent with the intended appointment.

What has experience shown to be the basis of a successful GA – supervisor relationship?

Previous GAs and supervisors all talk about the importance of reciprocal, clear, honest and regular communication related to projects/tasks and any questions related to the fulfillment of hours. Since this is a professional appointment, there is an expectation that GAs will take considerable initiative in whatever task is presented and seek out collaborative solutions if difficulties present themselves.

If either a GA or the supervisor has questions or concerns about any GA assignment, he/she should communicate with and seek resolution with the person in question before asking for intervention from the MSW coordinator. It is important to remember that the written procedures and policies are necessary but not sufficient to ensure smooth operations of the GA system. Good interpersonal skills are also a requirement for the system to work to everyone's benefit.

Are reassignments possible?

A reassignment, and indeed all GA assignments, depends on GA availability, the faculty member's need for teaching and research support and contingent upon satisfactory performance. Thus, it is possible that a GA assignment to a faculty member may be terminated or not renewed if relationship or other issues cannot be resolved.

Can a student's GA be terminated?

Yes, continuation as a GA is contingent on performance, good academic standing, full-time enrollment, and compliance with all school and university rules and regulations and applicable ethical codes.

Are part-time students eligible for a GA?

No. All GAs must be full-time students as defined by enrollment in a minimum of 9 credit hours.

When are GAs paid?

GAs are paid once a month at the end of each month. Please visit the Human Resources site for exact pay dates.

Who manages the paperwork for GA appointments?

Each GA must sign a contract for the academic year that is provided by Jonia Smith, Payroll Coordinator of the Business Office.

Are there benefits like health insurance, sick leave or vacation?

No. Health insurance is available for purchase through the University. GAs observe student holidays and breaks. Reading days in the fall are not holidays. In cases of illness where medical intervention is required for someone in a GA position that affects their ability to work their obligated hours, the MSW coordinator should be contacted to help address the issue.

Testing Out of Courses

Should students believe that they have sufficient knowledge of the content of a particular course to be equivalent to the UNCW MSW course, they may request the opportunity to test out of the course. Such a student should put his/her request in writing to the MSW Coordinator. The student will be informed as to when and how they may take an examination to ascertain if his/her knowledge of the course is sufficient to test out. If they pass the examination, they will not have to take that particular course, but they will not receive course credit for it. They must then register and complete another course of equivalent credit hours and relevance to the MSW program, such that the student has completed the required 62 credit hours of the program.

Student Performance Evaluation

A student's performance in each course is evaluated by the criteria set forth by the instructor in the course syllabus. Additional evaluative procedures are undertaken during a student's field placement experience (see *MSW Field Education Manual*).

Additionally, students are encouraged to develop a poster presentation of the work accomplished in the research courses. These poster presentations are displayed at the annual CHHS Research Day.

Disciplinary Action/Termination

Generally, issues regarding termination from the MSW program result from concerns about performance in field placements, and that section of the *MSW Field Education Manual* is printed below. In the event termination may be warranted for other reasons, the termination process as set forth by the Graduate School and outlined on both the Graduate School website and in the *Code of Student Life*, are followed.

Field Placement Disciplinary Action/Termination:

Each student will have weekly supervision with her/his field instructor to discuss progress, practice techniques, etc., to keep the student appraised of field performance throughout the semester. Typically this relationship provides a positive support to navigate the learning experience and concerns can be addressed early in the semester so that the student has sufficient opportunity to take corrective action. Concerns should be addressed as soon as identified as avoidant behavior on the part of the field instructor, the student or the faculty liaison does not afford opportunity for the student to address the targeted behaviors. The field instructor will keep the faculty liaison and the student informed of any student performance concerns. Addressing these concerns in a timely manner is the most beneficial course of action and usually results in behavioral changes that can successfully resolve concerns. Should a student engage in professional misconduct, and neglect or disregard the recommendations of the field instructor and/or the faculty liaison, the student will be subject to disciplinary action depending on the severity of the infractions.

In addition, should there be an infraction of the *NASW Code of Ethics*, agency policy, etc. these concerns will be discussed with the student by both the field instructor and the faculty liaison, notifying the Director of Field Education to determine appropriate disciplinary action. Deliberation with the Student Standards Committee to assist in an ethical discussion of professional conduct can be initiated by a student, a faculty member, or a member of the Student Standards Committee to facilitate collaboration and determine a fair plan of action.

Should an ethical violation occur that requires dismissal from MSW field education and/or the MSW Program, including but not limited to sexual misconduct with clients and/or co-workers, fraud, violation of client confidentiality, etc., the field instructor and the faculty liaison will seek consultation with the Director of Field Education. Should a student wish to appeal a decision regarding professional misconduct, s/he must follow university policy as set forth in the *MSW Student Social Work Handbook* and the *UNCW Code of Student Life*.

As previously mentioned, appropriate consultation with appropriate university personnel will take place as needed to determine a clear understanding of policy, law, etc. pertaining to the individual student situation.

Support for Conference Travel

The Graduate School has limited financial assistance for graduate students who wish to go to conferences and present papers. There is an application for this on the Graduate Student website that should be completed and signed by the MSW Program Coordinator.

MSW and Graduate School Associations

The School of Social Work supports the Student Social Work Organization, which is open to membership of both graduate and undergraduate students. This active organization provides community services to agencies and sponsors student attendance at the annual NASW fall conference.

Students who meet eligibility requirements also may apply for membership in the Eta Omega Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society, the international honor society for Social Work students. MSW students also are eligible for membership in the University Graduate Student Council.

NASW and Social Work Licensure/Certifications

Professional social workers practice in a wide variety of settings, from schools to mental health institutions to prisons. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the professional association for the profession. It certifies social workers with an Academy for Certified Social Workers (ACSW) credential. In addition, social workers are licensed in all 50 states; however, the form and levels of certification and licensure vary widely. In some states, the term “social worker” has title protection and can only be used by persons qualified to do so through certification/licensure or holding a BSW or MSW degree.

In general, after receiving a BSW or MSW, social workers can receive an initial credential to practice. In North Carolina, these are CSW (Certified Social Worker) or CMSW (Certified Master Social Worker) certifications, which require the degree from an accredited program and passing an examination. North Carolina has two advanced levels of practice certification. After two years of supervised administrative experience and passing an exam, social workers may receive a Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM). All three levels of certification are voluntary. In contrast, the Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) is mandatory for all clinical social workers in North Carolina. It requires a minimum of 3,000 hours of post MSW paid clinical employment (with appropriately supervised clinical practice). And a candidate must have a minimum of 100 hours of supervision from an LCSW with 2+ years of LCSW experience. The following is a link for LCSW requirements across the country:
<http://socialworksupervisor.com/social-work-license/>

III. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES OF THE UNCW GRADUATE SCHOOL

The School of Social Work's MSW program follows the policies and procedures developed by the UNCW Graduate School. Please see the Graduate Catalogue for a complete discussion of these and additional topics. Highlighted below are those topics of particular importance to MSW graduate students.

Degree Time Limits

Masters level graduate students have five calendar years to complete their degree program. The period begins with the student's first term of work after admission to the MSW program. Should unusual circumstances arise, there is a provision to petition the Graduate School for an extension of time if this action is endorsed by the student's advisor and the Director of the School of Social Work.

Transfer Credits

A maximum of **six** semester hours of graduate credit may be transferred from another accredited institution in partial fulfillment of the master's degree. If a student has taken MSW courses at another CSWE-accredited school, each course will be individually evaluated in order to determine whether transfer credit would be appropriate. There is some variation across MSW programs, and only certain courses may be appropriate for transfer. In special circumstances, a student may petition the Graduate School for additional transfer credits. Grades on transferred work must be equivalent to a B or better, and must be taken within the allowed time limits for the degree. The MSW Graduate Coordinator must be consulted, and will formally recommend credit transfer to the Graduate School.

Retention Policy - GPA

The Graduate School requires that a student's GPA be maintained at a 3.0; should a student fall below this standard, he or she will go on academic probation and has nine credit hours to bring up their GPA to the required standard. Should a student receive three grades of C or one grade of F, they will be dismissed from the MSW program. A student who has received a grade of C in a graduate course may repeat that course once, and both grades will count toward the GPA. Courses with grades of A or B may not be repeated.

Academic Grievance Procedures

Procedure for Protest of Grade

Should a student be dissatisfied with a final grade in a course, he or she should attempt to resolve the issue with the course instructor. Should this attempt be unsatisfactory, the student should discuss the situation with the MSW Coordinator who may also involve the Director of the School of Social Work. If the situation is not resolved to the satisfaction of the student, s/he may make a written appeal to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services not later than the last

day of the subsequent semester. The Dean will attempt to resolve the matter through mutual agreement between the student and instructor. If no resolution can be obtained, the Dean will transmit the written appeal to the Graduate School.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Dean of the Graduate School will convene a Grade Appeals Committee with five members of the graduate faculty. The committee will determine if they support the instructor or the student, and will transmit their results as required by Graduate School policy.

Other Types of Grievances

Students concerned about any other matter relevant to their courses, other than grades, should attempt to resolve the issue directly with the instructor. Should the concern not be resolved to the student's satisfaction, he or she should then discuss the matter with the MSW Coordinator. If the situation is still unresolved, the student may appeal to the Director of the School of Social Work, but must do so within 30 days of the initial discussion with the faculty member. If the issue cannot be resolved at the School level, further instructions have been developed by the Graduate School to resolve the matter (please see the Graduate Catalogue).

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend all regular class meetings and examinations for all courses in which they are registered. Each faculty member is responsible for setting policy concerning the role of attendance in determining grades for her/his classes. It is the student's responsibility to learn and comply with the policies for each class.

Academic Honor Code

As stated in the Graduate Catalogue, "... no form of dishonesty among its faculty or students will be tolerated. ... Academic dishonesty takes many forms, from blatant acts of cheating, stealing, or similar misdeeds to the more subtle forms of plagiarism, all of which are totally out of place in an institution of higher learning." Should any violation of the honor code be suspected, students should inform their instructor or the MSW Coordinator. The university has established methods for instructors, schools and departments to handle violations of the honor code.

Procedures for Graduation

A student must have a 3.0 GPA on all graduate-level courses. At a designated date in the fall semester of the second year for full-time students or fall of third year for part-time students, students must submit an application for graduation to the Graduate School. This can be done on-line through the Graduate School website. The date for Commencement is designated in the academic calendar each year. Additionally, the School of Social Work holds its own celebration for graduating students.

Student Privacy Rights

Federal law guarantees rights to privacy of educational records, and students should be aware of these provisions. Students have a right to inspect their education records; if they believe them to be inaccurate, they may request to amend the record. A student's personal educational information may not be released to anyone without his/her consent, with the exception of certain eligible parents where the student is their legal dependent. Any requests for student information will be directed to the University registrar.

IV. MSW CURRICULUM

The MSW curriculum is divided into a foundation and an advanced level, with specific courses taught each semester in a progression of increasing specialization of content. All students take the same courses, with the exception of chosen electives. Electives may be chosen from social work courses or graduate level courses in other departments at the university. Social work curricula provide instruction in several sequences of the content, which is described below.

Course Content

Social Work Practice History, Social Policy and Ethics

Students learn about the history of social welfare, social work practice history and current social policy issues and debates in three courses in the first semester of their graduate program. The impact of key social policies, such as social security, Medicare, and poverty programs including welfare reform, are discussed and analyzed. Macro-economic policy is evaluated and connected to its impact on human service agencies and their services. Students become familiar with current social policy initiatives and to critically analyze new proposals and initiatives.

The ethics course focuses on the professional values and ethics of the social work profession, and on common ethical dilemmas experienced in the course of professional practice. Students are exposed to a variety of ethical concerns that may arise in various human service agency settings, and learn how to engage in the deliberation and resolution of ethical dilemmas, focusing on ethical principles from the *NASW Code of Ethics*.

Social Work Practice

The MSW program at UNCW is clinically focused, with a goal of developing practitioners who are able to provide competent counseling-related services to a wide range of client situations. The clinical philosophy of the program is based on a strengths-based, resiliency perspective which encourages the empowerment of clients in various social systems to make changes that will add to their quality of life. This approach emphasizes client-directed treatment approaches through the use of core strength-based treatment methods coupled with specialized therapeutic skills as needed.

In the four practice courses, students learn to develop empathic relationships with clients, to assess their needs for service, and to develop appropriate treatment plans. Students are then trained to provide three treatment methods in an in-depth manner (solution-focused practice, cognitive-behavioral therapy and motivational interviewing) through practice classes with accompanying skill-building labs. Additional methods of treatment are learned through certain electives. The core practice courses teach students treatment methods to work with individuals, families, and groups, and to adapt the core treatment methods to special client populations. After completing the four core practice courses and their accompanying skills labs, students should be quite competent in providing the core treatment methods to any client population.

Human Behavior in the Social Environment (HBSE)

The human behavior sequence is designed to provide an understanding of social systems of various sizes, theoretical perspectives on how they operate, and the implications of differential treatment of people of varying demographics. The initial course *Life Transitions and Human Development in the Social Environment (SWK 520)* provides information on the biological, psychological, social and spiritual development of individuals during the life span. The impact of various issues (such as diversity, race/ethnicity, prejudice and oppression) are examined on various stages of development, and students are also encouraged to examine their own personal course of development and family context.

The second HBSE course, *Social Diversity and Social Work Practice (SWK 522)*, provides students with an understanding of the impact of varying social identities on the lives of clients, and the effects of oppression and discrimination as society differentially responds to persons of various race/ethnicities, ability levels, and sexual orientation. As part of this course content, students learn skills in cultural competence and become aware of their own biases and prejudices.

The third course, *Mental Health and Psychopathology: Assessment and Differential Diagnostics (SWK 521)*, educates students about various types of mental illness, making a diagnostic assessment using the APA's current edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, and appropriate treatment methods for various types of mental disorders. Assignments enable the student to diagnose a client with whom they are working in their field placement, and develop a treatment plan, and do some intensive research on one type of mental disorder.

Research

The research sequence consists of two courses: 1) An introduction to research methods in which students learn various methodologies and, 2) Write a research proposal, and an applied course in which they implement this proposal in their field setting. Students develop core competencies in quantitative and qualitative research methods, and mixed method methodologies. After implementing their research project in a field setting, students are encouraged to write this up for publication and to present it to the academic community in a poster-type event.

Lastly, a course on organizational systems, the *Organizational Context of Clinical Social Work Practice (SWK 523)*, enables students to understand how organizations function, to analyze management, policy and evaluation functions, and to develop skills in financial analysis and development of marketing plans.

Full-Time Two-Year Degree Requirements (62 total credit hours)

The program requires satisfactory completion of 62 credit hours, including six credit hours of electives.

Fall semester year 1 (14 credit hours)

- SWK 500 - Clinical Practice I: Collaborative Strengths-Based Relationships in Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 500 - Clinical Practice I Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 506 - Research in Clinical Practice I: Evaluating Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWK 509 - Pre-Field Graduate Seminar Credits: 1
- SWK 513 - The Idea of Social Work: History, Philosophy, Theory and Ethics of Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWK 520 - Life Transitions and Human Development in the Social Environment Credits: 3

Spring semester year 1 (15 credit hours)

- SWK 501 - Clinical Practice II: Solution-Focused Social Work Practice with Couples, Families, Groups and Communities Credits: 3
- SWKL 501 - Clinical Practice II Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 510 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar I Credits: 5
- SWK 521 - Mental Health and Psychopathology: Assessment and Differential Diagnostics Credits: 3
- SWK 522 - Social Diversity and Social Work Practice Credits: 3

Fall semester year 2 (15 credit hours)

- SWK 502 - Clinical Practice III: Cognitive-Behavioral and Motivational Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 502 - Clinical Practice III Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 511 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar II Credits: 5
- SWK 514 - Social Policy and Service Organizations Credits: 3
- Elective - Social Work Elective Credits / Units: 3

Spring semester year 2 (18 credit hours)

- SWK 503 - Clinical Practice IV: Integrated Motivational, Cognitive, and Solution-Focused Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 503 - Clinical Practice IV Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 507 - Research in Clinical Practice II: Field Research Credits: 3
- SWK 512 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar III Credits: 5
- SWK 523 - Organizational Context of Clinical Social Work Practice: Management, Financing, Marketing and Policy Credits: 3
- Elective - Social Work Elective Credits / Units: 3

Extended Three Year Program Degree Requirements (62 total credit hours)

The program requires satisfactory completion of 62 credit hours, including six hours of electives.

Fall semester year 1 (6 credit hours)

- SWK 513 - The Idea of Social Work: History, Philosophy, Theory and Ethics of Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWK 520 - Life Transitions and Human Development in the Social Environment Credits: 3

Spring semester year 1 (6 credit hours)

- SWK 506 - Research in Clinical Practice I: Evaluating Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWK 514 - Social Policy and Service Organizations Credits: 3

Summer semester year 1 (7 credit hours)

- SWK 507 - Research in Clinical Practice II: Field Research Credits: 3
- SWK 509 - Pre-Field Graduate Seminar Credits: 1
- SWK 522 - Social Diversity and Social Work Practice Credits: 3

Fall semester year 2 (7 credit hours)

- SWK 500 - Clinical Practice I: Collaborative Strengths-Based Relationships in Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 500 - Clinical Practice I Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 560 - Seminar for MSW Social Work Practicum I Credits: 3

Spring semester year 2 (10 credit hours)

- SWK 501 - Clinical Practice II: Solution-Focused Social Work Practice with Couples, Families, Groups and Communities Credits: 3
- SWKL 501 - Clinical Practice II Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 521 - Mental Health and Psychopathology: Assessment and Differential Diagnostics Credits: 3
- SWK 561 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar II Credits: 3 (3 credit hours required)

Summer semester year 2 (9 credit hours)

- SWK Elective: 3
- SWK Elective: 3
- SWK 562 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar III Credits: 3

Fall semester year 3 (10 credit hours)

- SWK 502 - Clinical Practice III: Cognitive-Behavioral and Motivational Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 502 - Clinical Practice III Lab Credits: 1

- SWK 523 - Organizational Context of Clinical Social Work Practice: Management, Financing, Marketing and Policy Credits: 3
- SWK 563 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar IV Credits: 3

Spring semester year 3 (7 credit hours)

- SWK 503 - Clinical Practice IV: Integrated Motivational, Cognitive, and Solution-Focused Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 503 - Clinical Practice IV Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 564 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar V Credits: 3

Advanced Standing Degree Requirements (39 total credit hours)

The program requires satisfactory completion of 39 credit hours, including three credit hours of electives.

Summer semester (9 credit hours)

- SWK 570- Advanced Standing Strengths-Based Solution-Focused Collaboration in Social Work Practice I Credits: 3
- SWKL 570: Advanced Standing Social Work Practice Lab I Credits: 1
- SWK 571- Advanced Standing Strengths-Based Solution-Focused Collaboration in Social Work Practice II Credits: 3
- SWKL 571: Advanced Standing Social Work Practice Lab II Credits: 1
- SWK 572: Advanced Standing Preparation for Clinical Internship Seminar Credits 1

Fall semester (15 credit hours)

- SWK 502 - Clinical Practice III: Cognitive-Behavioral and Motivational Social Work Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 502 - Clinical Practice III Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 511 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar II Credits: 5
- SWK 521 - Mental Health and Psychopathology: Assessment and Differential Diagnostics Credits: 3
- SWK Elective - Social Work Elective Credits: 3

Spring semester year (15 credit hours)

- SWK 503 - Clinical Practice IV: Integrated Motivational, Cognitive, and Solution-Focused Practice Credits: 3
- SWKL 503 - Clinical Practice IV Lab Credits: 1
- SWK 507 - Research in Clinical Practice II: Field Research Credits: 3
- SWK 512 - Field Instruction and Graduate Seminar III Credits: 5
- SWK 523 - Organizational Context of Clinical Social Work Practice: Management, Financing, Marketing and Policy Credits: 3

Internships – Field Instruction

All MSW programs require students to participate in field education in order to have supervised work with clients where they can implement the clinical theory and skills they are learning. The UNCW internship experience is different for each program. The extended, three-year program and the full-time, two-year program requires 900 field hours. The advanced standing program consists requires 600 field hours. This experience is increasingly intensive so that by the end of the program students are providing clinical services to a wide range of client systems. During the one term, a “pre-field” seminar exposes students to the roles that clinical social workers play in various human service settings and enables students to carefully determine what type of field experience is most appropriate for them, given their career interests. A field seminar accompanies the agency-based internship semesters to enable students to process agency policy and practice concerns, as well as to discuss client assessment, treatment planning, implementation and evaluation. Students are also supervised in their field setting by an LCSW-level social worker, providing an opportunity for students to begin their supervised training which will eventually culminate in clinical licensure. The internship program connects to the MSW practice sequence by providing a setting for implementation of new treatment methods as they are mastered by students. Focus is on individualized learning contracts for students and practice proficiency in the core treatment methods with clients of various size social systems.

Advising and Mentoring

All MSW students are advised by the MSW Coordinator when they enter the MSW program. Additional advising occurs throughout the field education process, with field faculty mentoring students as field placements are planned and implemented.

It is a student’s responsibility to follow catalogue requirements and deadlines, to meet School and University requirements, to select appropriate courses, and to make satisfactory academic progress. The student is responsible for obtaining a copy of the Degree Audit (through SeaNet online). The faculty advisor assists the advisee in the following ways:

1. Sharing knowledge about University and School policies, procedures and regulations, requirements for the MSW graduate degree, career opportunities and the potential job outlook.
2. Providing accurate information to each advisee on the program’s options and requirements.
3. Maintaining posted office hours for discussions as well as being available for scheduled appointments.
4. Exploring the advisee’s career goals and options.
5. Keeping an accurate and up-to-date record of each advisee’s progress toward meeting curriculum requirements, including a copy of any contractual agreements, and an anecdotal record of significant conversations.
6. Monitoring the advisee’s program toward educational and career goals, talking confidentially with the student about academic progress or problems to determine reasons for poor academic performance, and directing the student to the appropriate support service(s) when indicated.

V. ETHICAL CONDUCT

The UNCW School of Social Work highly values the principles set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics, and requires a course in ethical concepts and practice. Below is the NASW Code of Ethics in its entirety.

NASW CODE OF ETHICS

Code of Ethics

of the National Association of Social Workers

Approved by the 1996 NASW Delegate Assembly and revised by the 1999 NASW Delegate Assembly

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience.

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The *NASW Code of Ethics* sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The *Code* is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* serves six purposes:

1. The *Code* identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The *Code* summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The *Code* is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The *Code* provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The *Code* socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The *Code* articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members.* In subscribing to this *Code*, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

*For information on NASW adjudication procedures, see *NASW Procedures for the Adjudication of Grievances*.

The *Code* offers a set of values, principles, and standards to guide decision making and conduct when ethical issues arise. It does not provide a set of rules that prescribe how social workers should act in all situations. Specific applications of the *Code* must take into account the context in which it is being considered and the possibility of conflicts among the *Code*'s values, principles, and standards. Ethical responsibilities flow from all human relationships, from the personal and familial to the social and professional.

Further, the *NASW Code of Ethics* does not specify which values, principles, and standards are most important and ought to outweigh others in instances when they conflict. Reasonable differences of opinion can and do exist among social workers with respect to the ways in which values, ethical principles, and ethical standards should be rank ordered when they conflict. Ethical decision making in a given situation must apply the informed judgment of the individual social worker and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer review process where the ethical standards of the profession would be applied.

Ethical decision making is a process. There are many instances in social work where simple answers are not available to resolve complex ethical issues. Social workers should take into consideration all the values, principles, and standards in this *Code* that are relevant to any situation in which ethical judgment is warranted. Social workers' decisions and actions should be consistent with the spirit as well as the letter of this *Code*.

In addition to this *Code*, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking that may be useful. Social workers should consider ethical theory and principles generally, social work theory and research, laws, regulations, agency policies, and other relevant codes of ethics, recognizing that among codes of ethics social workers should consider the *NASW Code of Ethics* as their primary source. Social workers also should be aware of the impact on ethical decision making of their clients' and their own personal values and cultural and religious beliefs and practices. They should be aware of any conflicts between personal and professional values and deal with them responsibly. For additional guidance social workers should consult the relevant literature on professional ethics and ethical decision making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with ethical dilemmas. This may involve consultation with an agency-based or social work organization's ethics committee, a regulatory body, knowledgeable colleagues, supervisors, or legal counsel.

Instances may arise when social workers' ethical obligations conflict with agency policies or relevant laws or regulations. When such conflicts occur, social workers must make a responsible effort to resolve the conflict in a manner that is consistent with the values, principles, and standards expressed in this *Code*. If a reasonable resolution of the conflict does not appear possible, social workers should seek proper consultation before making a decision.

The *NASW Code of Ethics* is to be used by NASW and by individuals, agencies, organizations, and bodies (such as licensing and regulatory boards, professional liability insurance providers, courts of law, agency boards of directors, government agencies, and other professional groups) that choose to adopt it or use it as a frame of reference. Violation of standards in this *Code* does not automatically imply legal liability or violation of the law. Such determination can only be made in the context of legal and judicial proceedings. Alleged violations of the *Code* would be subject to a peer review process. Such processes are generally separate from legal or administrative procedures and insulated from legal review or proceedings to allow the profession to counsel and discipline its own members.

A code of ethics cannot guarantee ethical behavior. Moreover, a code of ethics cannot resolve all ethical issues or disputes or capture the richness and complexity involved in striving to make responsible choices within a moral community. Rather, a code of ethics sets forth values, ethical principles, and ethical standards to which professionals aspire and by which their actions can be judged. Social workers' ethical behavior should result from their personal commitment to engage in ethical practice. The *NASW Code of Ethics* reflects the commitment of all social workers to uphold the profession's values and to act ethically. Principles and standards must be applied by individuals of good character who discern moral questions and, in good faith, seek to make reliable ethical judgments.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: *Service*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients' socially responsible self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the

broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individuals, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession.

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern (1) social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients, (2) social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues, (3) social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings, (4) social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals, (5) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession, and (6) social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Some of the standards that follow are enforceable guidelines for professional conduct, and some are aspirational. The extent to which each standard is enforceable is a matter of professional judgment to be exercised by those responsible for reviewing alleged violations of ethical standards.

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.1 Commitment to Clients

Social workers' primary responsibility is to promote the well-being of clients. In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

1.2 Self-Determination

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

1.3 Informed Consent

(a) Social workers should provide services to clients only in the context of a professional relationship based, when appropriate, on valid informed consent. Social workers should use clear and understandable language to inform clients of the purpose of the services, risks related to the services, limits to services because of the requirements of a third-party payer, relevant costs, reasonable alternatives, clients' right to refuse or withdraw consent, and the time frame covered by the consent. Social workers should provide clients with an opportunity to ask questions.

(b) In instances when clients are not literate or have difficulty understanding the primary language used in the practice setting, social workers should take steps to ensure clients' comprehension. This may include providing clients with a detailed verbal explanation or arranging for a qualified interpreter or translator whenever possible.

(c) In instances when clients lack the capacity to provide informed consent, social workers should protect clients' interests by seeking permission from an appropriate third party, informing clients consistent with the clients' level of understanding. In such instances social workers should seek to ensure that the third party acts in a manner consistent with clients' wishes and interests. Social workers should take reasonable steps to enhance such clients' ability to give informed consent.

(d) In instances when clients are receiving services involuntarily, social workers should provide information about the nature and extent of services and about the extent of clients' right to refuse service.

(e) Social workers who provide services via electronic media (such as computer, telephone, radio, and television) should inform recipients of the limitations and risks associated with such services.

(f) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before audiotaping or videotaping clients or permitting observation of services to clients by a third party.

1.4 Competence

(a) Social workers should provide services and represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, license, certification, consultation received, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience.

(b) Social workers should provide services in substantive areas or use intervention techniques or approaches that are new to them only after engaging in appropriate study, training, consultation, and supervision from people who are competent in those interventions or techniques.

(c) When generally recognized standards do not exist with respect to an emerging area of practice, social workers should exercise careful judgment and take responsible steps (including appropriate education, research, training, consultation, and supervision) to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients from harm.

1.5 Cultural Competence and Social Diversity

(a) Social workers should understand culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.

(b) Social workers should have a knowledge base of their clients' cultures and be able to demonstrate competence in the provision of services that are sensitive to clients' cultures and to differences among people and cultural groups.

(c) Social workers should obtain education about and seek to understand the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.

1.6 Conflicts of Interest

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

1.7 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

- (d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.
- (e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.
- (f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.
- (g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.
- (h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.
- (i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.
- (j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.
- (k)) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.
- (l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.
- (m)) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.
- (n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.
- (o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- (p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.8 Access to Records

(a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the clients. Social workers who are concerned that clients' access to their records could cause serious misunderstanding or harm to the client should provide assistance in interpreting the records and consultation with the client regarding the records. Social workers should limit clients' access to their records, or portions of their records, only in exceptional circumstances when there is compelling evidence that such access would cause serious harm to the client. Both clients' requests and the rationale for withholding some or all of the record should be documented in clients' files.

(b) When providing clients with access to their records, social workers should take steps to protect the confidentiality of other individuals identified or discussed in such records.

1.9 Sexual Relationships

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers--not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship--assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers--not their clients--who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

1.10 Physical Contact

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

1.11 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass clients. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

1.13 Payment for Services

(a) When setting fees, social workers should ensure that the fees are fair, reasonable, and commensurate with the services performed. Consideration should be given to clients' ability to pay.

(b) Social workers should avoid accepting goods or services from clients as payment for professional services. Bartering arrangements, particularly involving services, create the potential for conflicts of interest, exploitation, and inappropriate boundaries in social workers' relationships with clients. Social workers should explore and may participate in bartering only in very limited circumstances when it can be demonstrated that such arrangements are an accepted practice among professionals in the local community, considered to be essential for the provision of services, negotiated without coercion, and entered into at the client's initiative and with the client's informed consent. Social workers who accept goods or services from clients as payment for professional services assume the full burden of demonstrating that this arrangement will not be detrimental to the client or the professional relationship.

(c) Social workers should not solicit a private fee or other remuneration for providing services to clients who are entitled to such available services through the social workers' employer or agency.

1.14 Clients Who Lack Decision-Making Capacity

When social workers act on behalf of clients who lack the capacity to make informed decisions, social workers should take reasonable steps to safeguard the interests and rights of those clients.

1.15 Interruption of Services

Social workers should make reasonable efforts to ensure continuity of services in the event that services are interrupted by factors such as unavailability, relocation, illness, disability, or death.

1.16 Termination of Services

(a) Social workers should terminate services to clients and professional relationships with them when such services and relationships are no longer required or no longer serve the clients' needs or interests.

(b) Social workers should take reasonable steps to avoid abandoning clients who are still in need of services. Social workers should withdraw services precipitously only under unusual circumstances, giving careful consideration to all factors in the situation and taking care to minimize possible adverse effects. Social workers should assist in making appropriate arrangements for continuation of services when necessary.

(c) Social workers in fee-for-service settings may terminate services to clients who are not paying an overdue balance if the financial contractual arrangements have been made clear to the client, if the client does not pose an imminent danger to self or others, and if the clinical and other consequences of the current nonpayment have been addressed and discussed with the client.

- (d) Social workers should not terminate services to pursue a social, financial, or sexual relationship with a client.
- (e) Social workers who anticipate the termination or interruption of services to clients should notify clients promptly and seek the transfer, referral, or continuation of services in relation to the clients' needs and preferences.
- (f) Social workers who are leaving an employment setting should inform clients of appropriate options for the continuation of services and of the benefits and risks of the options.

2. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues

2.1 Respect

- (a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.
- (b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, and mental or physical disability.
- (c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

2.2 Confidentiality

Social workers should respect confidential information shared by colleagues in the course of their professional relationships and transactions. Social workers should ensure that such colleagues understand social workers' obligation to respect confidentiality and any exceptions related to it.

2.3 Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- (a) Social workers who are members of an interdisciplinary team should participate in and contribute to decisions that affect the well-being of clients by drawing on the perspectives, values, and experiences of the social work profession. Professional and ethical obligations of the interdisciplinary team as a whole and of its individual members should be clearly established.
- (b) Social workers for whom a team decision raises ethical concerns should attempt to resolve the disagreement through appropriate channels. If the disagreement cannot be resolved, social workers should pursue other avenues to address their concerns consistent with client well-being.

2.4 Disputes Involving Colleagues

- (a) Social workers should not take advantage of a dispute between a colleague and an employer to obtain a position or otherwise advance the social workers' own interests.
- (b) Social workers should not exploit clients in disputes with colleagues or engage clients in any inappropriate discussion of conflicts between social workers and their colleagues.

2.5 Consultation

- (a) Social workers should seek the advice and counsel of colleagues whenever such consultation is in the best interests of clients.
- (b) Social workers should keep themselves informed about colleagues' areas of expertise and competencies. Social workers should seek consultation only from colleagues who have demonstrated knowledge, expertise, and competence related to the subject of the consultation.
- (c) When consulting with colleagues about clients, social workers should disclose the least amount of information necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

2.6 Referral for Services

- (a) Social workers should refer clients to other professionals when the other professionals' specialized knowledge or expertise is needed to serve clients fully or when social workers believe that they are not being effective or making reasonable progress with clients and that additional service is required.
- (b) Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should take appropriate steps to facilitate an orderly transfer of responsibility. Social workers who refer clients to other professionals should disclose, with clients' consent, all pertinent information to the new service providers.
- (c) Social workers are prohibited from giving or receiving payment for a referral when no professional service is provided by the referring social worker.

2.7 Sexual Relationships

- (a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact with supervisees, students, trainees, or other colleagues over whom they exercise professional authority.
- (b) Social workers should avoid engaging in sexual relationships with colleagues when there is potential for a conflict of interest. Social workers who become involved in, or anticipate becoming involved in, a sexual relationship with a colleague have a duty to transfer professional responsibilities, when necessary, to avoid a conflict of interest.

2.8 Sexual Harassment

Social workers should not sexually harass supervisees, students, trainees, or colleagues. Sexual harassment includes sexual advances, sexual solicitation, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

2.9 Impairment of Colleagues

- (a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's impairment that is due to personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties and that interferes with practice effectiveness should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- (b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague's impairment interferes with practice effectiveness and that the colleague has not taken adequate steps to address the impairment should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.10 Incompetence of Colleagues

- (a) Social workers who have direct knowledge of a social work colleague's incompetence should consult with that colleague when feasible and assist the colleague in taking remedial action.
- (b) Social workers who believe that a social work colleague is incompetent and has not taken adequate steps to address the incompetence should take action through appropriate channels established by employers, agencies, NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, and other professional organizations.

2.11 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

- (a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues.
- (b) Social workers should be knowledgeable about established policies and procedures for handling concerns about colleagues' unethical behavior. Social workers should be familiar with national, state, and local procedures for handling ethics complaints. These include policies and procedures created by NASW, licensing and regulatory bodies, employers, agencies, and other professional organizations.
- (c) Social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should seek resolution by discussing their concerns with the colleague when feasible and when such discussion is likely to be productive.
- (d) When necessary, social workers who believe that a colleague has acted unethically should take action through appropriate formal channels (such as contacting a state licensing board or regulatory body, an NASW committee on inquiry, or other professional ethics committees).
- (e) Social workers should defend and assist colleagues who are unjustly charged with unethical conduct.

3. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities in Practice Settings

3.1 Supervision and Consultation

- (a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.
- (b) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.
- (c) Social workers should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with supervisees in which there is a risk of exploitation of or potential harm to the supervisee.
- (d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.2 Education and Training

- (a) Social workers who function as educators, field instructors for students, or trainers should provide instruction only within their areas of knowledge and competence and should provide instruction based on the most current information and knowledge available in the profession.

(b) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should evaluate students' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

(c) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients are routinely informed when services are being provided by students.

(d) Social workers who function as educators or field instructors for students should not engage in any dual or multiple relationships with students in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the student. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.3 Performance Evaluation

Social workers who have responsibility for evaluating the performance of others should fulfill such responsibility in a fair and considerate manner and on the basis of clearly stated criteria.

3.4 Client Records

(a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in records is accurate and reflects the services provided.

(b) Social workers should include sufficient and timely documentation in records to facilitate the delivery of services and to ensure continuity of services provided to clients in the future.

(c) Social workers' documentation should protect clients' privacy to the extent that is possible and appropriate and should include only information that is directly relevant to the delivery of services.

(d) Social workers should store records following the termination of services to ensure reasonable future access. Records should be maintained for the number of years required by state statutes or relevant contracts.

3.5 Billing

Social workers should establish and maintain billing practices that accurately reflect the nature and extent of services provided and that identify who provided the service in the practice setting.

3.6 Client Transfer

(a) When an individual who is receiving services from another agency or colleague contacts a social worker for services, the social worker should carefully consider the client's needs before agreeing to provide services. To minimize possible confusion and conflict, social workers should discuss with potential clients the nature of the clients' current relationship with other service providers and the implications, including possible benefits or risks, of entering into a relationship with a new service provider.

(b) If a new client has been served by another agency or colleague, social workers should discuss with the client whether consultation with the previous service provider is in the client's best interest.

3.7 Administration

(a) Social work administrators should advocate within and outside their agencies for adequate resources to meet clients' needs.

(b) Social workers should advocate for resource allocation procedures that are open and fair. When not all clients' needs can be met, an allocation procedure should be developed that is nondiscriminatory and based on appropriate and

consistently applied principles.

(c)) Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.

(d) Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment for which they are responsible is consistent with and encourages compliance with the NASW Code of Ethics. Social work administrators should take reasonable steps to eliminate any conditions in their organizations that violate, interfere with, or discourage compliance with the Code.

3.8 Continuing Education and Staff Development

Social work administrators and supervisors should take reasonable steps to provide or arrange for continuing education and staff development for all staff for whom they are responsible. Continuing education and staff development should address current knowledge and emerging developments related to social work practice and ethics.

3.9 Commitments to Employers

(a) Social workers generally should adhere to commitments made to employers and employing organizations.

(b) Social workers should work to improve employing agencies' policies and procedures and the efficiency and effectiveness of their services.

(c)) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that employers are aware of social workers' ethical obligations as set forth in the NASW Code of Ethics and of the implications of those obligations for social work practice.

(d) Social workers should not allow an employing organization's policies, procedures, regulations, or administrative orders to interfere with their ethical practice of social work. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that their employing organizations' practices are consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate discrimination in the employing organization's work assignments and in its employment policies and practices.

(f) Social workers should accept employment or arrange student field placements only in organizations that exercise fair personnel practices.

(g) Social workers should be diligent stewards of the resources of their employing organizations, wisely conserving funds where appropriate and never misappropriating funds or using them for unintended purposes.

3.10 Labor-Management Disputes

(a) Social workers may engage in organized action, including the formation of and participation in labor unions, to improve services to clients and working conditions.

(b) The actions of social workers who are involved in labor-management disputes, job actions, or labor strikes should be guided by the profession's values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. Reasonable differences of opinion exist among social workers concerning their primary obligation as professionals during an actual or threatened labor strike or job action. Social workers should carefully examine relevant issues and their possible impact on clients before deciding on a course of action.

4. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities as Professionals

4.1 Competence

(a) Social workers should accept responsibility or employment only on the basis of existing competence or the intention to acquire the necessary competence.

(b) Social workers should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and the performance of professional functions. Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work. Social workers should routinely review the professional literature and participate in continuing education relevant to social work practice and social work ethics.

(c) Social workers should base practice on recognized knowledge, including empirically based knowledge, relevant to social work and social work ethics.

4.2 Discrimination

Social workers should not practice, condone, facilitate, or collaborate with any form of discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.

4.3 Private Conduct

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

4.4 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

4.5 Impairment

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

4.6 Misrepresentation

(a) Social workers should make clear distinctions between statements made and actions engaged in as a private individual and as a representative of the social work profession, a professional social work organization, or the social worker's employing agency.

(b) Social workers who speak on behalf of professional social work organizations should accurately represent the official and authorized positions of the organizations.

(c) Social workers should ensure that their representations to clients, agencies, and the public of professional qualifications, credentials, education, competence, affiliations, services provided, or results to be achieved are accurate. Social workers should claim only those relevant professional credentials they actually possess and take steps to correct

any inaccuracies or misrepresentations of their credentials by others.

4.7 Solicitations

(a) Social workers should not engage in uninvited solicitation of potential clients who, because of their circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence, manipulation, or coercion.

(b) Social workers should not engage in solicitation of testimonial endorsements (including solicitation of consent to use a client's prior statement as a testimonial endorsement) from current clients or from other people who, because of their particular circumstances, are vulnerable to undue influence.

4.8 Acknowledging Credit

(a) Social workers should take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed and to which they have contributed.

(b) Social workers should honestly acknowledge the work of and the contributions made by others.

5. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Social Work Profession

5.1 Integrity of the Profession

(a) Social workers should work toward the maintenance and promotion of high standards of practice.

(b) Social workers should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession. Social workers should protect, enhance, and improve the integrity of the profession through appropriate study and research, active discussion, and responsible criticism of the profession.

(c) Social workers should contribute time and professional expertise to activities that promote respect for the value, integrity, and competence of the social work profession. These activities may include teaching, research, consultation, service, legislative testimony, presentations in the community, and participation in their professional organizations.

(d) Social workers should contribute to the knowledge base of social work and share with colleagues their knowledge related to practice, research, and ethics. Social workers should seek to contribute to the profession's literature and to share their knowledge at professional meetings and conferences.

(e) Social workers should act to prevent the unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work.

5.2 Evaluation and Research

(a) Social workers should monitor and evaluate policies, the implementation of programs, and practice interventions.

(b) Social workers should promote and facilitate evaluation and research to contribute to the development of knowledge.

(c) Social workers should critically examine and keep current with emerging knowledge relevant to social work and fully use evaluation and research evidence in their professional practice.

- (d) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should carefully consider possible consequences and should follow guidelines developed for the protection of evaluation and research participants. Appropriate institutional review boards should be consulted.
- (e) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should obtain voluntary and written informed consent from participants, when appropriate, without any implied or actual deprivation or penalty for refusal to participate; without undue inducement to participate; and with due regard for participants' well-being, privacy, and dignity. Informed consent should include information about the nature, extent, and duration of the participation requested and disclosure of the risks and benefits of participation in the research.
- (f) When evaluation or research participants are incapable of giving informed consent, social workers should provide an appropriate explanation to the participants, obtain the participants' assent to the extent they are able, and obtain written consent from an appropriate proxy.
- (g) Social workers should never design or conduct evaluation or research that does not use consent procedures, such as certain forms of naturalistic observation and archival research, unless rigorous and responsible review of the research has found it to be justified because of its prospective scientific, educational, or applied value and unless equally effective alternative procedures that do not involve waiver of consent are not feasible.
- (h) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- (i) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- (j) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- (k)) Social workers engaged in the evaluation of services should discuss collected information only for professional purposes and only with people professionally concerned with this information.
- (l) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should ensure the anonymity or confidentiality of participants and of the data obtained from them. Social workers should inform participants of any limits of confidentiality, the measures that will be taken to ensure confidentiality, and when any records containing research data will be destroyed.
- (m)) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- (n) Social workers should report evaluation and research findings accurately. They should not fabricate or falsify results and should take steps to correct any errors later found in published data using standard publication methods.
- (o) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest and dual relationships with participants, should inform participants when a real or potential conflict of interest arises, and should take steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes participants' interests primary.
- (p) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

6.1 Social Welfare

Social workers should promote the general welfare of society, from local to global levels, and the development of people, their communities, and their environments. Social workers should advocate for living conditions conducive to the fulfillment of basic human needs and should promote social, economic, political, and cultural values and institutions that are compatible with the realization of social justice.

6.2 Public Participation

Social workers should facilitate informed participation by the public in shaping social policies and institutions.

6.3 Public Emergencies

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

6.4 Social and Political Action

(a) Social workers should engage in social and political action that seeks to ensure that all people have equal access to the resources, employment, services, and opportunities they require to meet their basic human needs and to develop fully. Social workers should be aware of the impact of the political arena on practice and should advocate for changes in policy and legislation to improve social conditions in order to meet basic human needs and promote social justice.

(b) Social workers should act to expand choice and opportunity for all people, with special regard for vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited people and groups.

(c) Social workers should promote conditions that encourage respect for cultural and social diversity within the United States and globally. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for difference, support the expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programs and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence, and promote policies that safeguard the rights of and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

(d) Social workers should act to prevent and eliminate domination of, exploitation of, and discrimination against any person, group, or class on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, political belief, religion, or mental or physical disability.