

# Bachelor of Social Work Handbook



Behavioral Science Department  
Utah Valley University

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## **Introduction**

“There is only one child in the world and the Child’s name is All Children.” -Carl Sandburg

Dear BSW Students:

Welcome to the BSW program at Utah Valley University! You have made an important decision to pursue a career in social work. Social work is a profession with roots that extend into nearly all walks of life. It is a very noble profession that is geared toward helping those who are often the most neglected of society. Social work seeks to ennoble the disenfranchised through educating individuals who are professional, ethical, and highly skilled. This is a challenging program, but you were selected to be part of the BSW program because you have demonstrated a commitment to helping vulnerable populations, promoting social justice, and a respect for individual worth. You will have many opportunities to engage in service, be steeped in scholarship, and become a talented professional. BSW graduates from Utah Valley University are prepared for careers in child and adult protective services, schools, mental health settings, women’s shelters, nursing homes, hospitals, and other interesting agencies that serve people in need. We, as faculty and staff, are excited that you have chosen to pursue a degree in social work and are committed to your successful completion of the program.

We are pleased to have you a part of the social work family at UVU and wish you well in the next two years.

Martin McDonell PhD, BSW Program Director

Alan Misbach, Director of Field Education

Katelyn Peterson, BSW Faculty

*Program Mission Statement and Goals*

## **Program Mission Statement and Goals**

### **Mission Statement**

The Bachelor of Social Work Program at Utah Valley University is committed to engaged student learning by combining innovative teaching, student-mentored scholarly work, and community collaboration to develop social work professionals who are proficient in generalist practice within the overarching ecological theoretical framework.

The Social Work Program seeks to promote a healthy community within a global context through collaborative efforts that maximize human potential and promote social and economic justice through learner-centered teaching, research and scholarship, service and outreach.

### **Program Goals**

1. To prepare students to be social work professionals and competent generalist practitioners with individuals, families, groups, communities, and societies.
2. To prepare students to assist in the promotion of social and economic justice within individual, family, political, cultural, and social context.
3. To enhance professional development within students through engaged teaching methods, service learning activities, and self-exploration.
4. To promote the profession of social work in the local community and identify how it is impacted by the global context.
5. To prepare students to be effective consumers of research and its application to social work practice.

*Program Eligibility*

## Program Eligibility

The BSW is a competitive admission program. Due accreditation standards, no more than 50 students will be accepted to begin each academic year. Students submit their applications in January, are notified regarding their admission status in March, and those who have been accepted begin the program in the following fall semester (for exact dates, contact your behavioral science academic advisor).

In order to be admitted to (and remain in) the BSW program, students must:

1. Be currently admitted to UVU ([www.uvu.edu/apply](http://www.uvu.edu/apply))
2. Have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5
3. Have completed:
  - a. ENGL 1010 with C+ grade or higher (prior to submitting application)
  - b. ENGL 2010 or 2020 with C+ grade or higher (prior to submitting application)
  - c. SW 1010 with B- grade or higher (prior to submitting application)
  - d. All general education requirements (before beginning program in fall)

All students who meet the minimum application requirements are welcome to apply. No student will be denied admission based upon race, gender, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, culture, creed, class, ethnicity, or national origin.

Criminal conviction or pending criminal charges will not necessarily disqualify a student from admission to the BSW. However, past or future criminal activity or conduct may limit or inhibit a student from completing a social work internship which is required to complete the degree or render the student ineligible to receive state certification or licensure to practice social work. For more information, contact the Utah Division of Professional Licensing (DOPL) at:

<http://www.dopl.utah.gov/>

Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admittance. Students can contact their assigned behavioral science academic advisor to discuss what will make them most competitive as a candidate. Appointments can be scheduled by calling by the department office at (801) 8636377.

Students admitted to the program are those who have a combination of excellent grades, relevant work/internship/volunteer experience, excellent recommendations from professors and/or supervisors, and a thoughtful and concise personal statement. Students denied admission to the program may apply one more time. Students may not apply to the BSW program more than two times.

*Program Eligibility*

Students accepted into the BSW program must be able to take classes on a full-time basis on campus (classes are not taught online).

For details on how to apply to the BSW programs, see “How to Apply” on the following page.

## How to Apply

To make your application to the BSW program as strong and accurate as possible, and for the benefit of the admission committee members who will be reviewing and scoring each application, please ensure that you have carefully read and followed the instructions below before submitting your application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. Questions regarding the application process can be directed to your behavioral science academic advisor.

**Note:** The instructions below require you to produce and/or obtain a variety of different documents. These documents are to be submitted in an 8.5" x 11" envelope. On this envelope, include your full name and student ID number.

1. Ensure that you are eligible for the program (see "Program Eligibility" section in this handbook).
2. Fill out the application form (available at [www.uvu.edu/besc/socialwork.html](http://www.uvu.edu/besc/socialwork.html)).
3. Write a 2-page essay describing how you gained your interest in a social work career. Include life experiences that may have influenced this decision. Also, discuss your strengths and limitations that could impact your performance as a BSW student and future social worker. This Personal Statement should be typed, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12 pt. Times New Roman font, two pages in length.
4. Create a one-page resume that details your educational, professional, and volunteer experience relevant to a career in social work. Include agency, supervisor name, dates worked, and how many hours you worked per week or month.
5. Obtain two letters of recommendation from individuals who have recent knowledge of your qualifications and can speak about your fit for the social work profession. References from employers, supervisors, and behavioral science or other UVU faculty are appropriate. Please note that references may not be obtained from the full-time social work faculty at UVU. References from family members, personal friends, co-workers (non-supervisors), or ecclesiastical leaders are also not appropriate.

Provide a signed copy of the Letter of Recommendation form (available at [www.uvu.edu/besc/socialwork.html](http://www.uvu.edu/besc/socialwork.html)) and an envelope to each of your reference writers. Request that your references complete the form, place the documents in the envelope, seal it, sign across the seal, and return it to you. **DO NOT BREAK THE SEAL.** Reference envelopes that have been opened or have not been signed across the seal will not be accepted.



6. Include an official transcript from each higher education institution you have attended (including UVU). Transcripts from the school you are attending in the fall semester immediately before the January application deadline must include the grades earned in that fall semester. Therefore, you must request these transcripts after your fall grades have posted. Official transcripts must be in sealed envelopes (from the original institution) to be valid.

7. After completing each of the previous instructions, submit your application in an 8.5" x 11" envelope in one of the following ways:

You can drop off your application on or before the posted deadline at:

BSW Admissions  
Behavioral Science Department  
Liberal Arts Building  
Office: 012 (LA 012)

Or, you can mail your application on or before the posted deadline to:

BSW Admissions  
Behavioral Science Department  
Mailstop 115  
Utah Valley University  
Orem, UT 84058-5999

8. The review of submitted applications will focus on academic achievement, commitment to social work ethics, a beginning understanding of the social work profession, professional attitude and behavior, emotional maturity, and ability to express oneself in writing.

If needed, students may be asked to complete a formal interview with the admission committee and/or submit additional documentation to support a student's readiness for a career in social work. The admissions committee may seek additional information from faculty, applicant, or other formal sources.

9. Students are notified in writing regarding their admission status in March (for exact dates, contact your behavioral science academic advisor).

## BSW Degree Requirements

Students admitted to the BSW program, after having their eligibility for the program confirmed, and after having completed their general education requirements prior to beginning the program, must complete the following requirements to earn the Bachelor of Social Work degree.

Please note academic credit will not be awarded for previous work or life experience of any kind.

Descriptions for the courses below can be found in Wolverine Track or in the “Course Catalog” found here: <http://www.uvu.edu/catalog/index.html>.

<b>Discipline Core Requirements</b>	<b>63 credits</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Social Work Core</u> (complete all of the following courses) <span style="float: right;"><b>48 credits</b></span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BESC 3010 Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences <span style="float: right;">4 credits</span></li> <li>○ BESC 3020 Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ BESC 3800 Interviewing Skills <span style="float: right;">4 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 1010 Introduction to Social Work <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3000 Social Work Practice I ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3100 Social Work Practice II ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3200 Social Work Practice III ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3300 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3400 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3500 Social Welfare Policies and Services ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 3600 Ethics and Values in Social Work Practice ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 371G Diversity Issues in Social Work Practice ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 4800 Integrated Seminar I ** <span style="float: right;">2 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 481R Field Placement (1/2) ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 481R Field Placement (2/2) ** <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ SW 4850 Integrated Seminar II ** <span style="float: right;">2 credits</span></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <u>Social Work Electives</u> (choose from the following courses) <span style="float: right;"><b>15 credits</b></span> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ BESC 3100 Career and Graduate School Preparation for Behavioral Science Majors * <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ BESC 3410 Fundamentals of Mediation and Negotiation <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ BESC 4050 Clinical Research * <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ FAMS 3250 Applied Parenting <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> <li>○ FAMS 4660 Family Financial and Resource Management <span style="float: right;">3 credits</span></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

○ LEGL 3320 Family Law	3 credits
○ PSY 3400 Abnormal Psychology *	3 credits
○ SOC 4020 Survey Research Design *	3 credits
○ SW 3510 International Social Work	3 credits
○ SW 3750 Child Abuse/Neglect and Domestic Violence	3 credits
○ SW 4500 Crisis Intervention	3 credits
○ SW 4700 Case Management in Social Work Practice	3 credits
○ SW 475R Current Topics in Social Work	3 credits
○ SW 490R Independent Studies	1 credit

**Elective Requirements**

**22 credits**

- Complete 22 additional credits of any courses 1000 to 4000 level.

**Graduation Requirements**

1. Completion of a minimum of 120 semester credits, 40 of which must be upper division.
2. Overall grade point average of 2.5 or above.
3. Residency hours -- minimum of 30 credit hours through course attendance at UVU, with at least 10 credit hours earned in the last 45 credit hours.
4. All 48 credits of the BSW Social Work core requirements must be completed with a grade of B- or higher.
5. All 15 credits of Social Work electives must be completed with a C- grade or higher.
6. Completion of one course that meets the Global/Intercultural Requirement, indicated by a course number ending in G.

Please see department advisor to make an academic plan and for an explanation of all admission and program requirements.

**Footnotes**

\* Recommended for students who plan on applying to M.S.W. programs

\*\* Students must be formally admitted into the BSW program in order to register for this course.

## **Field Practicum and Licensure**

### **Placement in the Field Practicum**

Social Work at the Bachelor's level is a licensed profession in Utah. Practitioners must be able to apply professional knowledge, values, and skills ethically. Practice courses provide skill development activities in order for students to develop skills such as interviewing and assessment, intervention, and evaluation. During the senior year, students complete internships during the *fall and spring* semesters. Students are assigned to social services agencies by the Field Director, with consideration of the students' interests and learning needs, and the availability of field agencies. These internships provide opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in classes to real-life situations with clients. Field Practicum students are supervised and guided by professional social workers in agencies in order to ensure that they have productive educational experiences. The BSW program expects students to exemplify professional and ethical behavior in accordance with current professional social work standards. The BSW program expects all students to obey the law, to show respect for properly constituted authority, to perform contracted obligations, to maintain absolute integrity and high standards of individual honesty in academic work, and to observe a high standard of conduct within the academic and professional environment. In short, a student enrolled in the program accepts the obligation to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner acceptable at an institution of higher learning and within the social work profession.

### **Admissions to the Field Practicum**

Students entering Field must be fully admitted to the Social Work Program and have completed required prerequisites with a grade of "B-" or higher in all core social work courses, and a "C-" or higher in all social work elective courses. They must have a GPA of 2.0 in the major and overall, and must have completed the application process for Field. The field experience entails completion of 450 clock hours at the field agency, weekly attendance at a seminar on campus and enrollment in related, concurrent classes. The Field Director makes field agency assignments with input from the student and field agency staff. Most students feel that their field internships are among the most valuable experiences in the program. Field experiences often help a student narrow their choices for a field of practice within social work. Field Instructors can be very helpful in assisting students with the job search process. Many students are hired by agencies in which they completed internships, or by agencies they learned of while in field.

*Field Practicum and Licensure*

**Licensure**

Most states regulate the practice of social work through certification or licensure. Persons without these credentials are prohibited by law from calling themselves social workers or practicing social work. The State of Utah licenses social workers at several levels: Social Service Worker (SSW); Certified Social Worker (CSW); and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). The SSW requires a bachelors degree, and with a BSW from an accredited (or from a program in candidacy) you may sit for the exam upon graduation, rather than having to wait for a year and fulfill the supervision requirements. The CSW and LCSW both require an MSW from an accredited program (or from a program in candidacy). For more information go to: [http://www.dopl.utah.gov/licensing/forms/applications/074\\_social\\_work.pdf](http://www.dopl.utah.gov/licensing/forms/applications/074_social_work.pdf)

## **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

According to University policy, “a student subject to suspension or dismissal (from the University or the BSW program) may petition the Academic Standards Committee for an exception to the Academic Standards Policy. To do so, he/she must submit a written appeal to the Standards Coordinator. In this petition, the student may request that he/she be granted a hearing before the Academic Standards Committee. The petition should set forth the extenuating circumstances that would warrant the granting of a waiver of the student's suspension, or dismissal status. Evidence should be presented which would indicate that the student has carefully considered and re-assessed educational objectives and has eliminated those factors which led to suspension, or dismissal status. If a student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Academic Standards Committee, the student has the right to present a written appeal to the Vice President for Student Services, within two weeks following notification of the committee's decision.”

### **General Rights**

A student, while properly enrolled at the institution, will have the right to the following institution services, treatment, and information:

1. Free and open discussion, inquiry and expression, subject to constitutional limitations regarding time, place, and manner.
2. Protection against the institution's improper disclosure of students' records, work, views, beliefs, and political associations.
3. Procedural safeguard and personal privacy with respect to testing for drugs and infectious diseases (e.g. AIDS).
4. Timely and understandable information and respectful treatment regarding policies, refunds, lab fees, course fees, library fines, lab breakages and liability, etc.
5. Freedom from a discriminatory and offensive campus environment that may cause emotional stress or a hostile or offensive campus environment directed toward another person.
6. Freedom from sexual harassment.
7. Full protection under the Constitution for freedom of the press, including the Constitutional limitations on prior restraint and censorship.

8. Due process of law recognized as being essential to the proper enforcement of institution rules.
9. Security for his/her person, papers, and personal effects against unreasonable searches and seizures.
10. Freedom to form and to operate an organized student association within the guidelines prescribed by the institution.
11. Access to the institution's Ombudsman for consultation in matters of personal and school issues and concerns.
12. Student representation through student government on institutional committees, councils, commissions, and other formally constituted bodies that make general policy and procedure decisions directly affecting students or that govern student activities and conduct.
13. Access to all student government sponsored activities.
14. Accurate information in advertising, recruitment, and orientation efforts.

### **General Responsibilities**

A student assumes the responsibility to conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner. Categories of misconduct that are not considered responsible behavior include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Failure to respect the right of every person to be secure from fear, threats, intimidation, harassment, hazing and/or physical harm caused by the activities of groups or individuals.
2. Sexual assault, harassment, or any other unwelcome verbal or physical sexual activity, including the support or assistance of such activities.
3. Unauthorized seizure or occupation of any institutional building or facility.
4. Obstruction, disruption or interference with teaching, disciplinary proceedings, institution sponsored activities and services or events.
5. Use or possession of any weapon, explosive device, or fireworks on a person or storage of such on institutional property without prior written approval from the Chief of Campus Police.

6. Unlawful use, possession, distribution, sale, manufacture, or possession for purposes of distribution or sale of any controlled substance or illegal drug on any property or in any building owned, leased or rented by the institution or at any activity sponsored by the institution.
7. Initiation or circulation of any false report, warning or threat of fire, bombs or explosives on institutional premises or during institution-sponsored events.
8. Violation of the Utah Indoor Clean Air Act and/or the institution smoking policy (institution Policy 158 Tobacco).
9. Sale, possession, manufacture, distribution or consumption of alcoholic beverages on institution properties.
10. Unauthorized possession, forging, altering, misusing or mutilating of institutional documents, records, educational materials, identification, (e.g., personal ID, parking decal, etc.) or other institution property.
11. Violation of city ordinances and/or state statutes regarding gambling.
12. Delivery of false information to institutional personnel.
13. Theft or malicious destruction, damage or misuse of institution property or private property of another person on the institution campus or when engaged in activities sponsored or supervised by the institution off campus.
14. Intentional or reckless destroying, defacing, vandalizing, damaging or misusing the property, equipment, materials, services or data of the institution.
15. Unauthorized possession or use of a key to any institution facility or equipment.
16. Obscenity and lewd conduct as defined by institution policy, city ordinances, and/or state statutes.
17. Failure to adhere to all laws and regulations governing the duplication and use of copyrighted materials including, but not limited to, printed and audio materials, video, film, and/or computer software.
18. Unauthorized use or charges to any institution telephone for long distance calls. Institution telephones are for business use only.

19. Unauthorized off-campus fund raising activities on behalf of the institution. All fund raising must have prior written approval from the institution's Development Office.
  
20. Intent to defraud the institution in any financial matter including, but not limited to:
  - a. Non-redemption of personal checks refused by a bank;
  - b. Sale/resale of supplies, books, or equipment in violation of institution agreements;
  - c. Falsifying institution financial records; and/or
  - d. Non-payment of tuition and fees as set forth by institution regulations.
  - e. Failure to conduct oneself in a way that does not endanger the health and well-being of other student and institution personnel.
  - f. Unauthorized commercial ventures or enterprises on institution property.
  - g. Bringing animals on campus, except for those serving the disabled or those used for educational purposes.
  - h. Allowing children in institution classrooms or laboratories (unless they are an integral part of instruction) or leaving children unattended in hallways and restrooms or at institution-sponsored events and functions.

Students are encouraged to report violations of this policy to an appropriate institutional office.

If a student is deemed to have violated professional and ethical standards of conduct they may be dismissed from the program. Consistent with University policy, programs are given decisionmaking power to dismiss students from their respective programs.

For a complete description of University Policy on Students' Rights and Responsibilities go to:

[http://www.uvu.edu/catalog/2010-2011/pdfversion/information\\_policies\\_services/studentrights\\_responsibilities.pdf](http://www.uvu.edu/catalog/2010-2011/pdfversion/information_policies_services/studentrights_responsibilities.pdf)

## **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 2008 NASW Delegate Assembly

#### **Preamble**

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing 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 wellbeing in a social context and the wellbeing 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.

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 *NASW Code of Ethics* 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 wellbeing 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.

For the NASW Code of Ethics in its entirety go to:  
<http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>

## **Contact Us**

### Social Work Faculty

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