

Master of Social Work Handbook

Behavioral Science Department Utah Valley University

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# Introduction

### “When a flower doesn’t bloom you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower."

### – Alexander Den Heijer

Dear MSW Students:

Welcome to the MSW 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 MSW 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 applied learning, be steeped in scholarship, and become a talented professional. MSW graduates from Utah Valley University are prepared for careers in mental health settings, hospitals, women’s shelters, child welfare, addictions, 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.

Elijah Neilson, MSW Program Director

Mykenzie Hydo, MSW Associate Field Director

Sara Lafkas, MSW Faculty

Alan Misbach, MSW Field Director

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# Program Mission Statement and Goals

### Mission Statement

The Master 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 advanced generalist practice. This mission derives from the university’s commitment to excellence and 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. The MSW program is to provide transformative and collaborative learning that embraces the values of social justice and inclusion while promoting an enhanced quality of life for individuals and communities, particularly for communities of color.

### Program Goals

1. To prepare students to be social work professionals and competent advanced 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, clinically-based learning activities, and self-exploration.
4. To promote the profession of social work in the local community and identify how it is impacted within the global context.
5. To engage with communities of color in order to increase service provision and utilization of services for historically marginalized populations.
6. To prepare students to be effective practitioners by evaluating research and engaging in research-informed practice.

# Program Eligibility

The MSW is a competitive admission program. Due to current university and accreditation standards, no more than 30 students will be accepted to begin each academic year. Students submit their applications in December, 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, visit our website at: <https://www.uvu.edu/msw/programinformation.html> or contact your behavioral science academic advisor).

Requirements for admission to the MSW Program include:

1. A bachelor’s degree from a regionally-accredited university or college.
2. Academic credentials attesting to strong scholarship – generally a grade point average of 3.0 or above.
3. Completion of three required prerequisite courses: Introduction to Social Work; and an upper division Research Methods course, and Statistics course.

Recommended courses:

Abnormal Psychology. Courses with substantial contents on abnormal psychology, mental health deviance, drug addictions, violence, etc.; Human Development over life span. A course that covers the entire life span; Human Biology. Human biology (Zoology) or any biology course covering anatomy and physiology that emphasizes the impact of organic, chemical, and body systems impairments on human behavior (Note: not Introduction to Biology); Social Science with Macro context. (e.g. social institutions, organizations, systems, policies. Intro to Sociology, Political Science, Economics, or Anthropology.)

In addition to the above mentioned requirements, favored applicants show:

1. Adherence to the highest standards of conduct and ethics.
2. Emotional maturity.
3. Leadership and problem solving ability.
4. An aptitude for understanding and relating to people.
5. A demonstrated history of social service experience through volunteer or paid work experience in human service settings.

These skills and qualities are assessed through professional recommendations, an autobiographical statement, a critical thinking essay, student transcripts, and a resume.

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of full-time social work faculty, and if necessary (due to disagreements or a conflict of interest), arrangements have been made for another outside professional educator to review the applications as well. Applicants will be notified by email or postal mail if necessary.

Admission will be granted contingent upon completing all admissions criteria prior to beginning the MSW program.

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 MSW. 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) 863- 6211.

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 and essay response. Students denied admission to the program may apply additional times as desired.

Students accepted into the MSW 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 MSW programs, see “How to Apply” on the following page.

# How to Apply

To make your application to the MSW 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.

1. Ensure that you are eligible for the program (see “Program Eligibility” section in this handbook).
2. Complete online application at [**www.uvu.edu/msw**](http://www.uvu.edu/msw/), which includes an online essay.
3. Provide three letters of recommendation. Name and email address of professional references will be entered in the application.
4. Send all official university transcripts. If requesting electronic copy from your university, official transcripts must be emailed to [**etranscriptr@uvu.edu**](mailto:etranscriptr@uvu.edu).
5. Upload current resume that includes educational background and professional work experience.
6. Pay $45 application fee. (The application and application fee differ for [**International Students**](http://www.uvu.edu/admissions/student_docs/international.html))
7. 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.

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

**Deferment:** Students who have been accepted to the program may defer for a year, but must complete a Deferment Form and submit it to the MSW Program Director in order to be approved.

# MSW Degree Requirements

Students admitted to the MSW 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>.

### MSW Requirements 60 credits

* Social Work Core (complete all of the following courses) **54 credits**

SW 6000 Social Work Practice I (Individuals) 3

SW 6020 Social Work Practice II: Groups 3

SW 6030 Social Work Practice III: Advanced Practice with

Individuals and Families 3

SW 6040 Social Work Practice IV: Advanced Practice with

Groups and Complex Cases 3

SW 6050 Social Work Practice V: Advanced Practice with

Organizations and Communities 3

SW 6200 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I 3

SW 6210 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II 3

SW 6300 Social Welfare Policy and Analysis 3

SW 6320 Social Work with Latino, Pacific Islanders,

and other Communities of Color 3

SW 6400 Social Work Research Methods 3

SW 6500 Addictions 2

Field Practicum Requirement Complete the following:

SW 6810 Integrative Seminar I 1

SW 6820 Integrative Seminar II 1

SW 6830 Integrative Seminar III 1

SW 6840 Integrative Seminar IV 1

SW 6910 Foundation Field Practicum I 4

SW 6920 Foundation Field Practicum II 4

SW 6930 Advanced Field Practicum I 4

SW 6940 Advanced Field Practicum II 4

SW 6950 MSW Capstone 2

* Social Work Electives (choose from the following courses) **6credits**

Addictions

SW 6510 Clinical Issues in Substance-Related Addictions 2

SW 6520 Clinical Issues in Non-Substance-Related Addictions 2

SW 6530 Psychopharmacology 2

Mental Health

SW 6610 or Spirituality in Social Work 2

SW 6620 or Marriage and Family Therapy 2

SW 6630 Mental Health Diagnosis 2

SW 6640 Crisis Intervention 2

SW 6650 or Couples Therapy 2

SW 6660 Family Violence Across the Lifespan 2

Engaging with Diverse Populations

SW 6700 Advanced Practice with Communities of Color

and Other Diverse Populations 2

SW 6710 Policy Practice with Communities of Color and

Other Diverse Populations 2

### SW 6720 Engaging and Empowering the Latino Community 2

### Graduation Requirements

1. Completion of a minimum of 60 semester credits within the MSW, or with the inclusion of acceptable transfer credits\*.
2. Overall grade point average of 3.0 or above.
3. All 60 credits of the MSW must be completed with a grade of B- or higher.

\*Per university policy at least 40 credits must be completed at UVU for the two year program, and at least 30 credits for the Advanced Standing program). Transfer credits must have been completed at a CSWE accredited MSW program.

For more information on graduate transfer credit please refer to the Graduate Council’s website

https://www.uvu.edu/graduatestudies/studentguide/graduate-transfer-credit.html

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

# Field Practicum and Licensure

### Placement in the Field Practicum

Social Work at the Master’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 both years 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 MSW program expects students to exemplify professional and ethical behavior in accordance with current professional social work standards. The MSW 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 MSW program at UVU accepts the obligation to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner acceptable at an institution of higher learning and within the social work profession.

### Field Practicum Requirements

The field experience entails completion of 1000 (450 hours in the foundation year, and 550 hours in the advanced year) 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.

### 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>

# Student Rights and Responsibilities

According to University policy, “a student subject to suspension or dismissal (from the University or the MSW 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:
    1. Non-redemption of personal checks refused by a bank;
    2. Sale/resale of supplies, books, or equipment in violation of institution agreements;
    3. Falsifying institution financial records; and/or
    4. Non-payment of tuition and fees as set forth by institution regulations.
    5. Failure to conduct oneself in a way that does not endanger the health and well-being of other student and institution personnel.
    6. Unauthorized commercial ventures or enterprises on institution property.
    7. Bringing animals on campus, except for those serving the disabled or those used for educational purposes.
    8. 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.

**Academic Responsibilities**

1. Each student is expected to take an active role in the learning process by meeting course requirements as specified in written syllabi.
2. Each student is expected to display appropriate conduct in classroom situations that will enhance the learning environment.
3. Faculty members have the right to establish classroom standards of behavior and attendance requirements. Students will be expected to meet these requirements and make contact with faculty members when unable to do so.
4. Each student is expected to maintain academic ethics and honesty in all its forms, including, but not limited to, cheating and plagiarism as defined hereafter:
   1. Cheating is the act of using or attempting to use or providing others with unauthorized information, materials or study aids in academic work. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, passing examination answers to or taking examinations for someone else, or preparing or copying other’s academic work.
   2. Plagiarism is the act of appropriating another person’s or group’s ideas or work (written, computerized, artistic, etc.) or portions thereof and passing them off as the product of one’s own work in any academic exercise or activity.
   3. Fabrication is the use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings. Examples include but are not limited to:
      1. Citation of information not taken from the source indicated. This may include the incorrect documentation of secondary source materials.
      2. Listing sources in a bibliography not used in the academic exercise.
      3. Submission in a paper, thesis, lab report or other academic exercise of falsified, invented, or fictitious data or evidence, or deliberate and knowing concealment or distortion of the true nature, origin, or function of such data or evidence.
      4. Submitting as your own any academic exercise, (e.g., written work, printing, sculpture, etc.) prepared totally or in part by another.

**Sanctions**

1. Sanctions must be applied in a fair and impartial manner. Sanctions are assigned in accordance with two criteria: (1) Educational value for the student found in violation of institution Policy 541, the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code, (2) Commensurability of the violation and the assigned sanction.
2. Academic sanctions that may be imposed include:
   1. Warning
   2. Requiring a student to retake an exam(s)
   3. Requiring a student to re-write a paper(s) and/or repeat an assignment(s)
   4. A grade reduction
   5. A failing grade
   6. Probation with specified conditions
   7. Suspension from the Department, School, or Institution (must be reviewed and confirmed by Vice President of Academic Affairs and President)
   8. Expulsion from the Department, School, or Institution (must be reviewed and confirmed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and President)
   9. Revocation of admission or degree (for fraud, misrepresentation, or other serious violations of institution standards in obtaining the degree; must be reviewed and confirmed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and President)
   10. Withholding degree until completion of process and other sanctions relating to a violation of the Student Rights and Responsibilities Code

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 decision- making power to dismiss students from their respective programs.

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

# <https://www.uvu.edu/catalog/current/policies-requirements/student-rights-and-responsibilities.html>

# 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 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.

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, and 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 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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