



Plymouth State
UNIVERSITY

SOCIAL WORK

**Plymouth State University
Social Work Program
Student Handbook**

2023

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(updated 7/2023)

Introduction

“The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community wellbeing. Guided by a person-in- environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.” (CSWE, 2015, p.1)

The undergraduate Social Work degree at Plymouth State University is a specialized degree that prepares students for generalist social work practice in a wide range of settings with children, youth, families, adults, organizations, and communities. The curriculum has a solid foundation in the liberal arts, focusing on the biological, psychological and social sciences, as well as the knowledge, skills and values of the social work profession. In addition to entry-level practice, the degree prepares students to pursue graduate education in social work and other related fields.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) granted initial accreditation to the program in 1995. By continuing to meet the rigorous academic standards of CSWE, the program received accreditation in 1999 for the full eight-year cycle, ending in 2007 and again in 2015 for another eight-year cycle. The curriculum provides content in five basic areas of study: human behavior and the social environment, social welfare policy and services, practice theory and skills, research and field education. The field education component (450 supervised hours) provides students with a hands-on learning experience at human service agencies throughout New Hampshire. The curriculum integrates content on values and ethics, human diversity, populations-at-risk and the promotion of social and economic justice.

The development and implementation of the undergraduate curriculum is directed by the Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) identify nine core competencies that all social work program alumni should demonstrate. The competencies are as follows:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior.
2. Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
3. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic and Environmental Justice
4. Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research –informed practice.
5. Engage in policy practice
6. Engage with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
7. Assess individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
8. Intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities
9. Evaluate practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

([CSWE, 2015](#), p.3-9)

Students who graduate from the Social Work Major earn a BSSW (Bachelor of Science in Social Work). Graduates with this degree are eligible for practice in a variety of settings. These graduates may also be eligible for advanced standing in MSW programs that offer this option.

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Mission Statement, Program Goals, and Learning Objectives

Mission Statement

The mission of the Social Work Program is to educate and prepare baccalaureate students for effective, evidence-based professional social work practice that is rooted in the purpose and values of the profession, including respect for human dignity, diversity, self-determination, and advocating for just policies, programs, and services. In congruence with the University's philosophy "Ut prosim," or "that I may serve," the program advances knowledge and critical thinking skills to prepare students for generalist practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities and to enhance the fulfillment of human potential. The program is committed to promoting the values of social and economic justice. (Revised and Adopted by Social Work faculty on February 13, 2023)

Program Goals

The goals of the BSW program are to prepare students to respect human diversity, oppose social and economic injustice, and support and advocate for social reform in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, included in Appendix C. This preparation is rooted in the social work curriculum, which helps students develop professional values and ethics, as well as the social work practice skills needed to assist individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. Graduates of the BSW program will be able to:

1. Identify as a professional social worker, apply professional values, social work ethics, and respect for human diversity to guide professional practice, and apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
2. Understand the effects of oppression, discrimination, and inequality in a complex, diverse, and global society, and use practice skills to promote social and economic justice and deliver effective and culturally responsive social work services.
3. Apply the Person-in-Environment perspective and knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to work with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities, and respond to changing social contexts that impact practice.
4. Engage in BSW-level social work practice (engagement, assessment, intervention, evaluation) informed by the best available research and practice evidence and engage in critical self-reflective practice.

Program Learning Objectives

Students should develop the following knowledge, skills, and professional values:

1. Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice
2. Apply the values and ethics of social work in professional practice

3. Practice without discrimination and with respect for human diversity
4. Understand forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination in the U.S. and other parts of the world and strategies of change that advance social and economic justice
5. Understand and interpret the history of the social work and social welfare and its current structures and issues
6. Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist practice with systems of all sizes
7. Use theoretical frameworks to understand human development and behavior across the life span and interactions between people and their environments (social systems)
8. Analyze the impact of social policies on clients, practitioners, and agencies and influence social policies through professional social work practice
9. Evaluate research studies and apply findings to practice and, under supervision, evaluate their own practice interventions
10. Communicate and collaborate with clients, colleagues, and members of the community
11. Use supervision appropriate to generalist practice
12. Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems, and, under supervision, seek necessary organizational change

Non-Discrimination Statement

Plymouth State University, in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, veteran's status or disability, in admission or access to, treatment of or employment in its programs or activities. Inquiries regarding this policy should be made to the Title IX Coordinator, Plymouth State University, Plymouth, NH 03264. Further inquiries may also be addressed to the Director, Office of Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, Washington, DC 20201.

Curriculum

The Social Work Program offers a major course of study which leads to a Bachelor of Science degree. It is an accredited program, based on standards established by the national accreditation board, the Council on Social Work Education. The CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement is included in Appendix A.

Students typically follow the Academic Catalog for the year they entered PSU but have the option to follow any newer catalog. (See [Operative Catalog, Under University Policies and Procedures, PSU Academic Catalog, 2022-2023](#))

In order to meet the requirements for graduation with a B.S. in Social Work, students must complete 120 credits. These credits are broken up into the following requirements:

1. 65 credits in social work courses
2. 42-48 credits general education
3. 7-13 credits for electives

Social Work foundation courses provide the educational experience for students to gain the necessary understanding and skill development, forming the foundation of their ability to enter the Social Work profession. Social work majors must have a minimum grade of a C or higher.

Foundation Courses

- SW2200 Introduction to Social Work
- SW2300 Case Management and Advocacy
- SW2400 Professional Writing for SW
- SW3450 Social Welfare Policy
- SW3610 Theory & Practice Social Work Intervention I
- SW3660 Human Behavior in the Social Environment
- SW3520 Theory & Practice Social Work Intervention II
- SW3530 Theory & Practice Social Work Intervention III.
- SW4020 Social Work Research Methods
- SW4550 Integrated Seminar

Social Work Required Courses in Addition to Foundation Courses

- SW3050 Perspectives on Ageing
- SW3490 Diversity & Oppression
- Children and Family Elective (Choose One)
 - SW3130 Child Welfare & Family Services
 - SW3150 Child Maltreatment
- Health and Mental Health Elective (Choose One)
 - SW3300 Mental Health and Society
 - SW3500 Health and Society
- SW4430 Practicum

General Education Requirements

- IS1115 Tackling a Wicked Problem
- EN1400 English Composition
- Mathematics Foundation
- PS2010 Introduction to Psychology
- SO2225 Foundation of Sociology
- Quantitative Reasoning in Discipline Connection (choose 1)
 - MA2300 Statistics 1
 - SS/SW3705 Social Statistics
- Directions Courses (16 credits total)
 - CTDI (Creative Thought Direction, 3-4 credits)
 - PPDJ (Past and Present Direction, 3-4 credits)
 - SIDI (Scientific Inquiry Direction, 3-4 credits)
 - SSDI (Self and Society Direction, SW students are exempt in this category)
- Connections Courses (9-12 credits)
 - DICO (Diversity Connection, 3-4 credits)
 - GACO (Global Awareness Connection, 3-4 credits)
 - WECO (Wellness Connection, 3-4 credits)
 - QRCO Quantitative Reasoning in the Disciplines (taken within Social Work)

- TECO Technology in the Disciplines (taken within Social Work)
- WRCO Writing in the Disciplines (taken within Social Work)
- INCP (Integrated Capstone, 3-4 credits)

Grading Policy

Students may access more information about PSU's Grading System in the Course Catalog, Undergraduate Academic Policies at <https://coursecatalog.plymouth.edu/university-policies-procedures/undergraduate-academic-policies/>

In the Social Work Program, students will be graded using the rubric included in the Social Work Program's Grading Policy, included in Appendix B.

Academic and Career Advising Procedure

For more information, please see the Social Work Program's policy on Academic and Career Advising, included in Appendix B. Students can also consult the [Academic Catalog \(2023-2024\)](#) for more information on Academic and Career Advising.

Each Social Work student at Plymouth State University is assigned an academic advisor in the Social Work program. First-year students are also assigned an advisor from the Academic and Career Advising Center (ACAC) for their first year. Students are encouraged to meet and discuss their program requirements, career aspirations and/or graduate education with their advisor. Students are encouraged to meet with academic advisors more often so that a relationship may develop to enhance the student's education.

ACAC houses all Academic and Career Advisor offices, and can assist students in:

- reviewing remaining degree requirements;
- calculating major, discipline, and minor GPA averages;
- processing pertinent paperwork;
- course planning for their remaining semesters; and
- serving as a referral for available resources to help them achieve their goals.

Several advising tools and tips are available to students and faculty through the PSU Academic and Career Advising Center.

Admissions Application for Continuance in the Social Work Major

Admission Requirements

For more information, please see the Social Work Program's policy on Admission Requirements for continuance in the Social Work major, included in Appendix B.

Application Procedures

Students are advised to apply for continuance in the major by the end of the fall semester of their sophomore year. For more information about the application for continuance in the major, students should refer to the Social Work Program's policy on Admission Requirements for continuance in the Social Work major, included in Appendix B.

Students wishing to continue enrollment in the Social Work program should apply by the end of the fall semester of their sophomore year, or as soon as possible once transferring into the major. A copy of the Application for Continuance in the Major is included in Appendix C.

If students do not demonstrate the requisite skills, grades, written skills, or communication skills for continuance in the major, they may be “provisionally” accepted into the major. They will be asked to develop an improvement plan with their interviewing faculty member and/or the Social Work Program Director. The plan will include dates for plan review and achievement.

Continuance and Graduation Requirements

Once admitted, students must meet the continuation requirements in order to gain admission to Social Work Practicum ([SW 4430](#)), the concurrent Social Work Integrative Seminar ([SW 4550](#)), and to graduate with a BS in Social Work. These requirements can be found in the Social Work Program’s policy on Continuation and Graduation Requirements, included in Appendix B.

These academic standards should be monitored by the student and his/her faculty advisor throughout the student’s Social Work education. To be admitted to the Practicum and the Seminar (Social Work Integrative Seminar ([SW 4550](#))), students must have completed all of the course requirements of the major, achieved an overall grade point average of 2.0 and a major grade point average of 2.5, and earned a grade of C or better in the eight Social Work Foundation Courses (as listed above). Permission to enter the practicum will be granted in writing by the Program Director or the Field Education Director.

In addition to academic requirements, students are required to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Student behavior that is contrary to the ethics of the profession will be reviewed by the program to determine the student’s appropriateness for continuance in the major.

Behaviors that would warrant such a review are based on the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Examples of unprofessional or unethical behavior include impropriety in personal conduct (such as dishonesty or criminal behavior); exploitive relationships (such as sexual relationships or other behaviors pursued for personal advantage), e.g., with practicum clients; and any form of illegal discrimination or discrimination contrary to Plymouth State University policy (see the NASW Code of Ethics, included in Appendix D).

Admission of Transfer Students and Credits

Transfer students applying for admission to Plymouth State University and students applying for transfer credit for individual courses taken at other institutions follow a two-step assessment process:

First, decisions regarding admission are made by the University’s Admissions Office. Decisions regarding continuance in the major are made by the Social Work Program and would follow the same policy and procedures as stated within.

Second, the Registrar’s Office determines both acceptance of transfer credits and whether transfer credits are equivalent to General Education and elective courses. Please refer to the [University policy regarding transfer of these credits](#), found in the Academic Catalog.

Students may use transfer credits to apply to the Social Work Program at Plymouth State University. Please see the Social Work program policy for Admission of Transfer Students and Credits, in Appendix B for additional information. Decisions regarding transfer credit for courses that meet the requirements of the social work major are made by the Social Work Program Director. Appeals can be issued to the Office of the Registrar.

Appeals and Grievances

Appeals

In accordance with the Social Work Program's policy on Continuation and Graduation Requirements, included in Appendix B, students denied admission for continuance in the social work major, or in the practicum may use the following procedures to appeal the decision. The student should send a written request for reconsideration to the Program Director within fourteen (14) calendar days following the decision. The student must specify the basis for the appeal. The Program Director will discuss the appeal with social work faculty and the student within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal. Relevant materials, including the initial application and faculty advising notes, if any, will be reviewed.

Grievances

All Social Work Program students are encouraged to try to resolve conflicts informally before pursuing grievance or complaint procedures. However, as described in the Social Work Program's Student Grievance Policy in Appendix B, any PSU Social Work student may pursue the complaint procedures described below to resolve concerns involving faculty or staff.

Students should discuss their concerns directly with the faculty member and seek a resolution. However, if the student feels that direct discussion would be counterproductive or if, after consulting with the faculty member, a student still has a complaint, the student should talk with the coordinator of the Social Work program or the faculty member's program or academic unit.

If no satisfactory resolution results, the student may talk with the Student Advocate. If the matter is not resolved by the Student Advocate, final appeal may be made to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Life and Work Experience

Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience will not be given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or any of the courses required for the major. For more information, please refer to the Social Work Program's policy on Continuation and Graduation Requirements, included in Appendix B.

Program Assessment

The Social Work Program prepares students for entry-level practice in the profession of social work. As an accredited professional degree program, there is an obligation to evaluate

student preparation for practice and our performance as a program. Therefore, the program is constantly engaged in assessment of its learning outcomes. Students, faculty, field instructors, members of the program's Advisory Board, community practitioners, and graduates of the program all play a role in this process.

A number of different quantitative and qualitative tools for assessing student performance and program outcomes are used. These include a student evaluation of the field practicum, an evaluation of the student's performance in the field practicum, and course-embedded measures in the following courses: Social Welfare Policy and Services, Social Work Research Methods, and Social Work Integrative Seminar. Our program evaluation efforts also include surveys of alumni and current students providing students the opportunity to share input and feedback about their experience.

Professional and Ethical Expectations

In addition to academic requirements, students are required to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Student behavior that is contrary to the ethics of the profession will be reviewed by the program to determine the student's appropriateness for continuance in the major. For more information, students should refer to the Social Work Program's policy on Continuation and Graduation Requirements, included in Appendix B.

Behaviors that would warrant such a review are based on the Code of Ethics of the [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\)](#). Examples of unprofessional or unethical behavior include impropriety in personal conduct (such as dishonesty or criminal behavior); exploitative relationships (such as sexual relationships or other behaviors pursued for personal advantage, e.g., with practicum clients); and any form of discrimination or discrimination contrary to Plymouth State University policy (see the NASW Code of Ethics, included in Appendix D)

Program Advisory Board

Given the size of the social work faculty, there is no committee structure within the Program. However, there is an Advisory Board to the program that was established in Fall 1992. The purpose and structure are as follows:

Purpose

- To develop and maintain ongoing ties between the social work practice community and the program.
- To provide opportunities for students, field instructors and social work practitioners to contribute to the program's educational policies and curriculum content.

Composition

10-12 members representing students (currently enrolled and alumni), field instructors*, and social work practitioners from a range of fields of practice; Program Director, Field Education Coordinator, and program faculty.

Structure

Meetings are held as needed, at least once a year.

Tasks

To provide recommendations to address the areas listed below, as well as others identified by the board:

- The academic preparation of students for generalist practice and the practice needs of the community;
- The program's expectations for students in field education and the ability of agencies to meet these expectations;
- Proposed or anticipated changes in the curriculum and/or structure of the program, including the field;
- Proposed or anticipated special projects such as the Youth Success Project, Critical Time Intervention, and the Title IV-E Child Welfare Education program, and
- The maintenance and development of educational policies that assist with student recruitment, admission, advisement, retention, and graduation.

*Field instructors also have the opportunity to contribute through their participation in orientation and training sessions.

Student Participation in the Program

PSU social work students have a range of roles, responsibilities, and opportunities. These are as follows:

Student Organization

Social Work Club – Formed in 1990, the club is now a fully recognized and funded student organization with its own by-laws and elected student officers. Club functions include attendance at professional seminars, sponsoring guest speakers on campus, and community service activities. Through the regularly scheduled club meetings, students have a direct means of sharing their thoughts and concerns about the curriculum and program. The club also serves as the mechanism for representation by a student at social work faculty and/or advisory board meetings. A social work faculty member serves as an advisor to the club. The student club serves several functions as described above, but it is also a good way to meet other students in the program and to develop your own network of support. Students from other majors are also welcome to join.

Social Work Program Advisory Board

The board provides an opportunity for students in the major to contribute to the program's educational policies and curriculum content. Students are invited to attend the meetings as either officers of the Social Work Club and/or a student representative to NH NASW.

Safety in the Field

For more information, students should refer to the Social Work Program's policy on Safety in the Field, included in Appendix B.

In the practice of social work, as in many other human services, there is a degree of risk that stems from interaction and involvement with individuals and families as clients. Examples of risk include clients who may become angry or physically aggressive. While we do not anticipate that you will encounter problems or sustain any injuries, all risks cannot be prevented. While engaged in learning opportunities in the Social Work field, we want you to be aware of the possibility of risk and engage in behavior that promotes safety and minimizes risk.

As a student in the Social Work program, you will have the opportunity to engage in learning about safety in the Social Work field. For example, in Senior Seminar, the course that runs alongside your practicum, you will review helpful resources and engage in learning about workplace safety. You can also find helpful resources posted on the Social Work Practicum Canvas Learning page and will complete your agency's trainings on safety and related topics. Additionally, prior to beginning your field placement, each student will complete the Issues of Risk Information and Acknowledgement Statement form in collaboration with their Field Supervisor. This form located in Appendix C of the Field Education Manual clearly outlines the roles of the agency, the student, and the PSU Social Work program.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

Plymouth State University Social Work students, as individuals, enjoy the same rights that are guaranteed to every citizen of the United States and the State of New Hampshire, as do all students at Plymouth State University. The University affirms the right of students to freedom of expression, conscience, political and religious belief, and peaceful assembly and association. The University shall not infringe on any of these freedoms or any other student rights under federal or state law or University policy, including, but not limited to, the following rights:

Right to Freedom to Learn

The right to freedom to learn, which includes the right to freely examine, exchange, and debate diverse ideas, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Right to Freedom from Discrimination and Harassment

The right to pursue educational interests in an environment free from discrimination and harassment (including sexual harassment) in violation of federal or state law.

Right to Due Process

The right in major policy conduct matters to receive notification of the alleged violation, date, and location of the hearing, the right to participate in a fair hearing, and the right to appeal matters of judgment of academic performance and personal conduct.

Right to Federally Mandated Information

The right to information that is in compliance with federally mandated reporting requirements of universities. This includes information required through the Annual Security Report, Campus Crime Statistics, Drug Free Schools and Community Act of 1989, and Campus Sex Crimes Prevention Act.

Right to Participate in Student Governance

The right to participate in institutional governance and policy formation. The student senate is the student governing body of the University operating under a constitution approved by the University President before they become operative. The University President, by law, is the only person authorized to make such changes because they are charged legally with overseeing the entire operation of the University.

To review your Student Rights and Code of Conduct please visit:

<https://www.plymouth.edu/frost-house/student-rights-code-conduct>

APPENDIX A: CSWE Curriculum Policy Statement

The following was excerpted from the Council on Social Work Education's *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* available on their website from June 11, 2015. You may access it directly using the link below. <https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS>

The implicit curriculum refers to the learning environment in which the explicit curriculum is presented. It is composed of the following elements: the program's commitment to diversity; admissions policies and procedures; advisement, retention, and termination policies; student participation in governance; faculty; administrative structure; and resources. The implicit curriculum is manifested through policies that are fair and transparent in substance and implementation, the qualifications of the faculty, and the adequacy and fair distribution of resources. The culture of human interchange; the spirit of inquiry; the support for difference and diversity; and the values and priorities in the educational environment, including the field setting, inform the student's learning and development. The implicit curriculum is as important as the explicit curriculum in shaping the professional character and competence of the program's graduates. Heightened awareness of the importance of the implicit curriculum promotes an educational culture that is congruent with the values of the profession and the mission, goals, and context of the program.

Educational Policy 3.0—Diversity

The program's expectation for diversity is reflected in its learning environment, which provides the context through which students learn about differences, to value and respect diversity, and develop a commitment to cultural humility. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. The learning environment consists of the program's institutional setting; selection of field education settings and their clientele; composition of program advisory or field committees; educational and social resources; resource allocation; program leadership; speaker series, seminars, and special programs; support groups; research and other initiatives; and the demographic make-up of its faculty, staff, and student body.

Accreditation Standard 3.0—Diversity

3.0.1 The program describes the specific and continuous efforts it makes to provide a learning environment that models affirmation and respect for diversity and difference.

3.0.2 The program explains how these efforts provide a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

3.0.3 The program describes specific plans to continually improve the learning environment to affirm and support persons with diverse identities.

Educational Policy 3.1—Student Development

Educational preparation and commitment to the profession are essential qualities in the admission and development of students for professional practice. Student participation in

formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs are important for students' professional development.

Accreditation Standard 3.1—Student Development: Admissions; Advisement, Retention, and Termination; and Student Participation

Admissions

B3.1.1 The program identifies the criteria it uses for admission to the social work program.

3.1.2 The program describes the policies and procedures for evaluating applications and notifying applicants of the decision and any contingent conditions associated with admission.

3.1.4 The program describes its policies and procedures concerning the transfer of credits.

3.1.5 The program submits its written policy indicating that it does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The program documents how it informs applicants and other constituents of this policy.

Advisement, retention, and termination

3.1.6 The program describes its academic and professional advising policies and procedures. Professional advising is provided by social work program faculty, staff, or both.

3.1.7 The program submits its policies and procedures for evaluating student's academic and professional performance, including grievance policies and procedures. The program describes how it informs students of its criteria for evaluating their academic and professional performance and its policies and procedures for grievance.

3.1.8 The program submits its policies and procedures for terminating a student's enrollment in the social work program for reasons of academic and professional performance. The program describes how it informs students of these policies and procedures.

Student participation

3.1.9 The program submits its policies and procedures specifying students' rights and opportunities to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs.

3.1.10 The program describes how it provides opportunities and encourages students to organize in their interests.

** This and all future references to degrees from social work programs accredited by CSWE, include degrees from CSWE-accredited programs or recognized through CSWE's International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors.*

Educational Policy 3.2—Faculty

Faculty qualifications, including experience related to the Social Work Competencies, an appropriate student-faculty ratio, and sufficient faculty to carry out a program's mission and goals, are essential for developing an educational environment that promotes, emulates, and teaches students the knowledge, values, and skills expected of professional social workers. Through their teaching, research, scholarship, and service—as well as their interactions with one another, administration, students, and community—the program's faculty models the behavior and values expected of professional social workers. Programs demonstrate that faculty is qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned.

Accreditation Standard 3.2—Faculty

3.2.1 The program identifies each full- and part-time social work faculty member and discusses his or her qualifications, competence, expertise in social work education and practice, and years of service to the program.

3.2.2 The program documents that faculty who teach social work practice courses have a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-master's social work degree practice experience.

3.2.3 The program documents a full-time equivalent faculty-to-student ratio not greater than 1:25 for baccalaureate programs and not greater than 1:12 for master's programs and explains how this ratio is calculated. In addition, the program explains how faculty size is commensurate with the number and type of curricular offerings in class and field; number of program options; class size; number of students; advising; and the faculty's teaching, scholarly, and service responsibilities.

B3.2.4 The baccalaureate social work program identifies no fewer than two full-time faculty assigned to the baccalaureate program, with full-time appointment in social work, and whose principal assignment is to the baccalaureate program. The majority of the total full-time baccalaureate social work program faculty has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program, with a doctoral degree preferred.

3.2.5 The program describes its faculty workload policy and discusses how the policy supports the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.

3.2.6 Faculty demonstrate ongoing professional development as teachers, scholars, and practitioners through dissemination of research and scholarship, exchanges with external constituencies such as practitioners and agencies, and through other professionally relevant creative activities that support the achievement of institutional priorities and the program's mission and goals.

The program demonstrates how its faculty models the behavior and values of the profession in the program's educational environment.

Educational Policy 3.3—Administrative and Governance Structure

Social work faculty and administrators, based on their education, knowledge, and skills, are best suited to make decisions regarding the delivery of social work education. Faculty and administrators exercise autonomy in designing an administrative and leadership structure, developing curriculum, and formulating and implementing policies that support the education of competent social workers. The administrative structure is sufficient to carry out the program's mission and goals. In recognition of the importance of field education as the signature pedagogy, programs must provide an administrative structure and adequate resources for systematically designing, supervising, coordinating, and evaluating field education across all program options.

Accreditation Standard 3.3—Administrative Structure

3.3.1 The program describes its administrative structure and shows how it provides the necessary autonomy to achieve the program's mission and goals.

3.3.2 The program describes how the social work faculty has responsibility for defining program curriculum consistent with the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and the institution's policies.

3.3.3 The program describes how the administration and faculty of the social work program participate in formulating and implementing policies related to the recruitment, hiring, retention, promotion, and tenure of program personnel.

3.3.4 The program identifies the social work program director. Institutions with accredited baccalaureate and master's programs appoint a separate director for each.

B3.3.4(a) The program describes the baccalaureate program director's leadership ability through teaching, scholarship, curriculum development, administrative experience, and other academic and professional activities in social work. The program documents that the director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program with a doctoral degree in social work preferred.

B3.3.4(b) The program provides documentation that the director has a full-time appointment to the social work baccalaureate program.

B3.3.4(c) The program describes the procedures for calculating the program director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership to the program. To carry out the administrative functions specific to responsibilities of the social work program, a minimum of 25% assigned time is required at the baccalaureate level. The program discusses that this time is sufficient.

3.3.5 The program identifies the field education director.

3.3.5(a) The program describes the field director's ability to provide leadership in the field education program through practice experience, field instruction experience, and administrative and other relevant academic and professional activities in social work.

B3.3.5(b) The program documents that the field education director has a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program and at least 2 years of post-baccalaureate or post-master's social work degree practice experience.

B3.3.5(c) The program describes the procedures for calculating the field director's assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership for field education. To carry out the administrative functions of the field education program, at least 25% assigned time is required for baccalaureate programs. The program demonstrates this time is sufficient.

3.3.6 The program describes its administrative structure for field education and explains how its resources (personnel, time and technological support) are sufficient to administer its field education program to meet its mission and goals.

Educational Policy 3.4—Resources

Adequate resources are fundamental to creating, maintaining, and improving an educational environment that supports the development of competent social work practitioners. Social work programs have the necessary resources to carry out the program's mission and goals and to support learning and professionalization of students and program improvement.

Accreditation Standard 3.4—Resources

3.4.1 The program describes the procedures for budget development and administration it uses to achieve its mission and goals. The program submits a completed budget form and explains how its financial resources are sufficient and stable to achieve its mission and goals.

3.4.2 The program describes how it uses resources to address challenges and continuously improve the program.

3.4.3 The program demonstrates that it has sufficient support staff, other personnel, and technological resources to support all of its educational activities, mission and goals.

3.4.4 The program submits a library report that demonstrates access to social work and other informational and educational resources necessary for achieving its mission and goals.

3.4.5 The program describes and demonstrates sufficient office and classroom space and/or computer- mediated access to achieve its mission and goals.

3.4.6 The program describes, for each program option, the availability of and access to assistive technology, including materials in alternative formats.

Appendix B: Plymouth State University Social Work Program Policies

Academic and Career Advising

Each Social Work student at Plymouth State University is assigned an academic advisor in the Social Work program. First-year students are also assigned an advisor from the Academic and Career Advising Center (ACAC) for their first year.

It is the expectation of the Social Work program that students and advisors meet at least once every semester to review academic and professional development. Although it is ultimately the students' responsibility to ensure they have met all necessary requirements for graduation, advisors work closely with students to monitor progress. Successful advising requires that all parties be responsible for knowing the full range of University and Program supports for academic and professional development, and the requirements for graduation.

Admission Requirements

Students accepted by the University must also meet the requirements of the Program for admission. To apply, students must

1. be enrolled in or have completed Introduction to Social Work ([SW 2200](#)),
2. complete an application by submitting a written statement (see Social Work Student Handbook or Social Work homepage for more information and to complete the application), and
3. participate in a personal interview with a member of the Social Work faculty.

The criteria and procedures used for admission are based on the academic and professional standards established by the Council on Social Work Education, the national accrediting body.

The criteria used for assessment are:

1. intellectual qualities and academic skills;
2. commitment to the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families;
3. concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; and
4. capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

The Program of Social Work encourages applications from students from diverse backgrounds including race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, culture, political ideology, gender, gender identity and expression, sex, sexual orientation, social class, family type, religion, age, and physical and mental abilities. Students are advised to apply by their sophomore year. Applicants will receive notice regarding the decision within 14 calendar days of the interview. Students may be accepted provisionally and will develop, with the help of a faculty member, an action plan for improvement in one or more of the above criteria to be worked on during the following semester.

Admission of Transfer Students and Credits

Transfer students applying for admission to Plymouth State University and students applying for transfer credit for individual courses taken at other institutions follow a two-step assessment process:

First, decisions regarding admission are made by the University's Admissions Office. Decisions regarding continuance in the major are made by the Social Work Program and would follow the same policy and procedures as stated within.

Second, the Registrar's Office determines both acceptance of transfer credits and whether transfer credits are equivalent to General Education and elective courses. Please refer to the [University policy regarding transfer of these credits](#), found in the Academic Catalog.

Students may use transfer credits to apply to the Social Work Program at Plymouth State University.

- 1) Several non-social work courses are required for the liberal arts foundation for the major. Courses that are accepted for transfer credit as General Education or elective courses will generally be granted credit for the Social Work Program. However, the initial decisions made by the Admissions Office regarding these courses are sometimes reviewed on an individual basis by the Social Work Program Director. In some cases, additional information (such as course description, syllabi, texts, etc.) may be required by the Director to further assess the course and grant equivalency credit.
- 2) All social work courses with a grade of C or better from social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or in Candidacy Status will be applied to the major. In order to receive transfer credit for a social work course taken at a non-accredited social work program, the course must a) be completed with a grade of C or better; and b) be reviewed and approved by the Social Work Program. Decisions regarding transfer credit for these courses are made by the Program Director after reviewing course descriptions, texts used for the courses, syllabi, course requirements, instructors, and/or other related information.
- 3) Transfer credit is not granted for either the Practicum or the Social Work Seminar. Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be granted in lieu of any course required for the major. For more information, please see the Social Work Program's policy on Continuation and Graduation Requirements.

Decisions regarding transfer credit for courses that meet the requirements of the social work major are made by the Social Work Program Director. Appeals can be issued to the Office of the Registrar.

Continuation and Graduation Requirements

Once admitted, students must meet the following continuation requirements in order to gain admission to Social Work Practicum ([SW 4430](#)), the concurrent Social Work Integrative Seminar ([SW 4550](#)), and to graduate with a BS in Social Work:

1. a grade of C or better in the required Social Work Foundation Courses:

Course List

Course	Title	Credits
SW 2200	Introduction to Social Work	4
SW 2300	Case Management and Advocacy	3
SW 2400	Professional Writing for Social Work	1
SW 3450	Social Welfare Policy and Services	3
SW 3520	Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention II	3

Course List

Course	Title	Credits
SW 3530	Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention III	3
SW 3610	Theory and Practice of Social Work Intervention I	4
SW 3660	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	4
SW 4020	Social Work Research Methods (TECO)	3

2. a minimum major grade point average of 2.5 (all courses required for the major)
Students who wish to be readmitted into the major need to follow the most current Catalog. Transfer credit is not granted for either the Practicum or the Social Work Seminar. Academic credit for life experience and previous work experience shall not be granted in lieu of any course required for the major.

These academic standards should be monitored by the student and his/her faculty advisor throughout the student's Social Work education. To be admitted to the Practicum and the Seminar (Social Work Integrative Seminar ([SW 4550](#)), students must have completed all of the course requirements of the major, achieved an overall grade point average of 2.0 and a major grade point average of 2.5, and earned a grade of C or better in the other 8 Social Work Foundation Courses (as listed above). Permission to enter the practicum will be granted in writing by the Program Director or the Field Education Director. To graduate, students must earn a grade of C or better in Social Work Integrative Seminar ([SW 4550](#)) and a passing grade in Practicum.

In addition to academic requirements, students are required to demonstrate professional and ethical behavior. Student behavior that is contrary to the ethics of the profession will be reviewed by the program to determine the student's appropriateness for continuance in the major. Behaviors that would warrant such a review are based on the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Examples of unprofessional or unethical behavior include impropriety in personal conduct (such as dishonesty or criminal behavior); exploitive relationships (such as sexual relationships or other behaviors pursued for personal advantage), e.g., with practicum clients; and any form of illegal discrimination or discrimination contrary to Plymouth State University policy (see the NASW Code of Ethics).

Decisions regarding continuance in the major will be made by the Social Work Program Director and the social work faculty. Applicants will receive notice regarding the decision within fourteen (14) calendar days. Students may appeal the denial for continuance in the major by following the procedures for an appeal. Students denied continuance in the major will be informed in writing of the decision, the reason(s) for the decision, and the option to appeal.

Students have a right to appeal the social work program's decision for denial for admission for continuance in the social work major by writing to the Program Director. The Program Director, in consultation with the student's advisor and the faculty, will review all appeals. The decision to admit the student to practicum or to retain the student in the major will be made within fourteen (14) calendar days of written notification of the appeal. The program's decisions may be appealed to the Registrar's office.

Grading Policy

In the Social Work Program, students will be graded using the outlined grading rubric:

A (≥ 94 , 4.00), A- (90-93, 3.67):

Student demonstrates mastery of concepts covered in assigned readings/lectures through correct and creative application in assignments, reading responses, and class discussion; thorough knowledge of assigned readings; includes more than the minimum requirements in all assignments; creative/innovation approach to course materials; incorporation of additional/outside sources; demonstrated ability to synthesize materials to make novel arguments; no grammatical, spelling, or citation errors; active participation in all course components.

B+ (87-89, 3.33), B (83-86, 3.00), B- (80-82, 2.67):

Student displays competent understanding of concepts covered in assigned readings/lectures through written assignments, reading responses, and class discussion; thorough knowledge of most assigned readings; includes minimum requirements for assignments; supports analysis and interpretations using evidence and specific examples; minimal grammatical, spelling, or citation errors; active participation in most course components.

C+ (77-79, 2.33), C (73-76, 2.00), C- (70-72, 1.67):

Student displays adequate understanding of concepts covered in assigned readings/lectures through written assignments, reading responses, and class discussion; basic knowledge of most assigned readings; includes minimum requirements for assignments; assignments provide little analysis or interpretation and may be limited to summary; follows basic rules of grammar, spelling, and style with some errors in each area; citation errors; limited participation.

D+ (67-69, 1.33), D (63-66, 1.00), D- (60-62, 0.67):

Student displays rudimentary understanding of concepts covered in assigned readings/lectures through written assignments, reading responses, and class discussion; rudimentary knowledge of most assigned readings; includes minimum or below minimum requirements for assignments; assignments provide limited analysis or interpretation and may be primarily summary; follows basic rules of grammar, spelling, and style with many errors in each area; citation errors; limited to no participation in some course components.

F (≤ 59 , 0.00):

Student displays significant inaccuracies in understanding or application of concepts covered in assigned readings/lectures through written assignments, reading responses, and class discussion; limited knowledge of most assigned readings; assignments do not meet minimum requirements (e.g., number of sources); assignments demonstrate superficial understanding, limited integration of materials, and few efforts directed towards analysis or interpretation (e.g., summary only); significant errors in grammar, spelling, and style; limited to no participation in most course components.

Safety in the Field

In the practice of social work, as in many other human services, there is a degree of risk that stems from interaction and involvement with individuals and families as clients. Examples of risk include clients who may become angry or physically aggressive. While we do not anticipate that you will encounter problems or sustain any injuries while engaged in field activities during your learning at PSU, all risks cannot be prevented. In the case that a student is harmed, students should fill out an incident report in collaboration with their Field Instructor. This form is included in Appendix C of the Field Education Manual. Students should be aware of the possibility of risk and engage in behavior that promotes safety and minimizes risk. Students will have access to helpful resources about workplace safety and opportunities for learning in their social work classes, including in Senior Seminar and Social Work Practicum. For more information about the roles and responsibilities of the student, the agency, and the Social Work program during Social Work Practicum, please refer to the Issues of Risk Information and Acknowledgement Statement form located in Appendix C of the Field Education Manual.

Student Grievance Policy*

All members of the Social Work Program are encouraged to make efforts to resolve conflicts informally before pursuing grievance or complaint procedures. Students are encouraged to talk with faculty or staff members or to write letters to seek resolution of their concerns. In some cases, the Social Work program acknowledges that such action may be intimidating and/or ineffective when a student believes that a University faculty or staff member has not acted according to policies outlined in this publication or any other official publication of Plymouth State University. In those cases, any PSU Social Work student may pursue the complaint procedures described in the PSU Student Handbook or Field Education Manual to resolve concerns involving faculty or staff. However, a student is never required to confront a faculty or staff member believed to be discriminating or harassing and is encouraged to report the matter to the Title IX Coordinator in accordance with the [PSU Title IX Policy statement](#) and the [PSU Equal Opportunity, Harassment, and Non-discrimination Policy](#).

*Adapted from the University of New Hampshire

APPENDIX C: Application for Continuance in the Social Work Major

Please complete Part I and Part II of this form.

PART I: Cover Page

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name (Last, First, M.I.):

Student ID:

School Address:

Permanent Address:

Current Phone Number:

PSU Email Address:

Social Work Academic Advisor Name:

2. EDUCATION

High School:

Higher Education (if any):

Credits Achieved

Other Specialized Training (Volunteer, Military, etc.):

3. EMPLOYMENT

What work experiences if any have you had that relate to Social Work? Be Specific.

4. VOLUNTEER OR COMMUNITY EXPERIENCES

What volunteer activities or community experiences, if any, have you had that relate to Social Work? Be specific.

A. Service Learning placement for SW2200 Intro to Social Work

B. Other volunteer experience (Either prior to enrollment at PSU, or during enrollment through the Student Social Work Club; please specify)

5. NASW Code of Ethics Testimony

I am aware that the professional practice of social work (BSW and MSW degreed practitioners) is guided by the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. I have reviewed the NASW Code of Ethics (which can be accessed via the web at: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) as part of my application for continuance in the social work major.

Signature:

Date:

(Can provide a digital signature directly on this form if complete electronically)

6. Readiness for Social Work Practicum Statement

I understand that the Social Work major includes a 450-hour practicum and practicum sites may require health or criminal clearances. Although sites may cover the expenses of this requirement, ultimately it is my responsibility to ensure that the necessary clearances are obtained. I understand that the program will not cover the related expenses.

Signature:

Date:

(Can provide a digital signature directly on this form if complete electronically)

PART II: Written Personal Statement

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERSONAL STATEMENT

Personal Statement must be between 2 -3 FULL pages, typed, double-spaced, and written with proper Writing Mechanics, which includes introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs, error free from spelling, grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and word choice. Please **DO NOT** complete paper in Q&A format; use complete sentences. Attach (or include) the statement to (or with) this application.

Your statement should be a serious reflection on your thoughts and feelings about being in the Social Work Program. It will be considered carefully by the Social Work faculty as part of the application and approval process for continuance in the major. Address the following questions in a personal statement:

1. Why do you want to be a Social Work major? What personal (family and friends), academic, work, volunteer and/or community experiences influenced this decision?
2. What social problems in our society are of concern to you? Why do you think these problems exist and how can social work contribute to their alleviation?
3. What qualities, attributes, skills do you possess that could be used to solve problems?
4. What strengths do you feel you possess that will assist you in your career as a social worker? What areas of growth have you identified that you will need to address in your work as a social worker?
5. How would you describe your experiences with human diversity? What do you consider your strengths as well as areas in need of further growth in relation to working with people whose class, gender, culture, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, developmental ability, or mental health status are different from your own?
6. Please identify any significant events you have experienced in your life that could influence your practice as a social worker, or that you feel you will need to address in your work as a social worker.

Evaluation of Statement

The following factors will be considered when your application is reviewed by the program:

1. intellectual qualities and academic skills;
2. commitment to the enhancement of quality of life for individuals and families;
3. concern for issues of social justice and sensitivity to cultural diversity; and
4. capacity for self-awareness and self-evaluation.

PART III (Personal Interview)

Interviews will be scheduled within 30 days after the receipt of the application and personal statement. If materials submitted are insufficient for decision-making, additional information will be requested. The Program Director will assign a faculty member to contact you for a brief interview. The purpose of the interview is to provide an opportunity for you to discuss becoming a part of the social work profession. Students will be questioned as to their reasons for choosing Social Work as a major, what they know about the profession, and what areas of practice or client populations they want to work in or with.

Upon completion of the interview, the faculty member will make a recommendation to the Program Director. The Program Director reviews the recommendation and makes a final decision regarding student admission. Applicants receive written notice regarding the decision within 14 calendar days.

Provisional Acceptance: If a student receives a provisional acceptance status, the student is responsible for scheduling a meeting with their advisor and the Program Director within 3-7 business days of receiving the decision letter. The student, Program Director and advisor will create an improvement plan with a timeline in order to meet the provisional acceptance expectations.

APPENDIX D: NASW Code of Ethics

The [National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) Code of Ethics](#) can be accessed online. The following document was accessed April 9, 2023:

The NASW Code of Ethics is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. The 2021 update includes language that addresses the importance of professional self-care. Moreover, revisions to Cultural Competence standard provide more explicit guidance to social workers. All social workers should review the new text and affirm their commitment to abide by the Code of Ethics.

- The first Section, "Preamble," summarizes the social work profession's mission and core values.
- The second section, [Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics](#), provides an overview of the Code's main functions and a brief guide for dealing with ethical issues or dilemmas in social work practice.
- The third section, [Ethical Principles](#), presents broad ethical principles, based on social work's core values, that inform social work practice.
- The final section, [Ethical Standards](#), includes specific ethical standards to guide social workers' conduct and to provide a basis for adjudication.

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 dual 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, and encourages all social workers to engage in self-care, ongoing education, and other activities to ensure their commitment to those same core features of the profession.
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.

* For information on the NASW Professional Review Process, see NASW Procedures for Professional Review.

Furthermore, 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. In situations when conflicting obligations arise, social workers may be faced with complex ethical dilemmas that have no simple answers. 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.

With growth in the use of communication technology in various aspects of social work practice, social workers need to be aware of the unique challenges that may arise in relation to the maintenance of confidentiality, informed consent, professional boundaries, professional competence, record keeping, and other ethical considerations. In general, all ethical standards in this Code of Ethics are applicable to interactions, relationships, or communications, whether they occur in person or with the use of technology. For the purposes of this Code, “technology-assisted social work services” include any social work services that involve the use of computers, mobile or landline telephones, tablets, video technology, or other electronic or digital technologies; this includes the use of various electronic or digital platforms, such as the Internet, online social media, chat rooms, text messaging, e-mail and emerging digital applications. Technology-assisted social work services encompass all aspects of social work practice, including psychotherapy; individual, family, or group counseling; community organization; administration; advocacy; mediation; education; supervision; research; evaluation; and other social work services. Social workers should keep apprised of emerging technological developments that may be used in social work practice and how various ethical standards apply to them.

Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Professional demands, challenging workplace climates, and exposure to trauma warrant that social workers maintain personal and professional health, safety, and integrity. Social work organizations, agencies, and educational institutions are encouraged to promote organizational policies, practices, and materials to support social workers’ self-care.

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 should take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally. 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.

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

1. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to Clients

1.01 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.)

1.02 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.

1.03 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 their 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 should discuss with clients the social workers' policies concerning the use of technology in the provision of professional services.

(f) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should obtain informed consent from the individuals using these services during the initial screening or interview and prior to initiating services. Social workers should assess clients' capacity to provide informed consent and, when using technology to communicate, verify the identity and location of clients.

(g) Social workers who use technology to provide social work services should assess the clients' suitability and capacity for electronic and remote services. Social workers should consider the clients' intellectual, emotional, and physical ability to use technology to receive services and ability to understand the potential benefits, risks, and limitations of such services. If clients do not wish to use services provided through technology, social workers should help them identify alternate methods of service.

- (h) Social workers should obtain clients' informed consent before making audio or video recordings of clients or permitting observation of service provision by a third party.
- (i) Social workers should obtain client consent before conducting an electronic search on the client. Exceptions may arise when the search is for purposes of protecting the client or others from serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm, or for other compelling professional reasons.

1.04 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.
- (d) Social workers who use technology in the provision of social work services should ensure that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide such services in a competent manner. This includes an understanding of the special communication challenges when using technology and the ability to implement strategies to address these challenges.
- (e) Social workers who use technology in providing social work services should comply with the laws governing technology and social work practice in the jurisdiction in which they are regulated and located and, as applicable, in the jurisdiction in which the client is located.

1.05 Cultural Competence

- (a) Social workers should demonstrate understanding of culture and its function in human behavior and society, recognizing the strengths that exist in all cultures.
- (b) Social workers should demonstrate knowledge that guides practice with clients of various cultures and be able to demonstrate skills in the provision of culturally informed services that empower marginalized individuals and groups. Social workers must take action against oppression, racism, discrimination, and inequities, and acknowledge personal privilege.
- (c) Social workers should demonstrate awareness and cultural humility by engaging in critical self-reflection (understanding their own bias and engaging in self-correction), recognizing clients as experts of their own culture, committing to lifelong learning, and holding institutions accountable for advancing cultural humility.
- (d) Social workers should obtain education about and demonstrate understanding of the nature of social diversity and oppression with respect to race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (e) Social workers who provide electronic social work services should be aware of cultural and socioeconomic differences among clients' use of and access to electronic technology and seek to prevent such potential barriers. Social workers should assess cultural, environmental, economic, mental or physical ability, linguistic, and other issues that may affect the delivery or use of these services.

1.06 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.

(e) Social workers should avoid communication with clients using technology (such as social networking sites, online chat, e-mail, text messages, telephone, and video) for personal or non-work-related purposes.

(f) Social workers should be aware that posting personal information on professional Web sites or other media might cause boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

(g) Social workers should be aware that personal affiliations may increase the likelihood that clients may discover the social worker's presence on Web sites, social media, and other forms of technology. Social workers should be aware that involvement in electronic communication with groups based on race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, mental or physical ability, religion, immigration status, and other personal affiliations may affect their ability to work effectively with particular clients.

(h) Social workers should avoid accepting requests from or engaging in personal relationships with clients on social networking sites or other electronic media to prevent boundary confusion, inappropriate dual relationships, or harm to clients.

1.07 Privacy and Confidentiality

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from or about clients except for compelling professional reasons. 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 others. 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) If social workers plan to disclose confidential information, they should (when feasible and to the extent possible) inform clients about the disclosure and the potential consequences prior to disclosing the information. 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. This agreement should include consideration of whether confidential information may be exchanged in person or electronically, among clients or with others outside of formal counseling sessions. 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, electronically or in person, 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 reasonable steps to protect the confidentiality of electronic communications, including information provided to clients or third parties. Social workers should use applicable safeguards (such as encryption, firewalls, and passwords) when using electronic communications such as e-mail, online posts, online chat sessions, mobile communication, and text messages.

- (n) Social workers should develop and disclose policies and procedures for notifying clients of any breach of confidential information in a timely manner.
- (o) In the event of unauthorized access to client records or information, including any unauthorized access to the social worker's electronic communication or storage systems, social workers should inform clients of such disclosures, consistent with applicable laws and professional standards.
- (p) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of electronic technology, including Internet-based search engines, to gather information about clients.
- (q) Social workers should avoid searching or gathering client information electronically unless there are compelling professional reasons, and when appropriate, with the client's informed consent.
- (r) Social workers should avoid posting any identifying or confidential information about clients on professional Web sites or other forms of social media.
- (s) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with applicable laws governing records and social work licensure.
- (t) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.
- (u) 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.
- (v) 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.
- (w) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

1.08 Access to Records

- (a) Social workers should provide clients with reasonable access to records concerning the client. 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) Social workers should develop and inform clients about their policies, consistent with prevailing social work ethical standards, on the use of technology to provide clients with access to their records.
- (c) 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.

1.09 Sexual Relationships

- (a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities, inappropriate sexual communications through the use of technology or in person, 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, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

1.12 Derogatory Language

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written, verbal, or electronic 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, disruptions in electronic communication, relocation, illness, mental or physical ability, or death.

1.16 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 other services are 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.

1.17 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

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

2.01 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 verbal, written, and electronic 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical ability.
- (c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

2.02 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.

2.03 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.

2.04 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.

2.05 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.

2.06 Sexual Relationships

- (a) Social workers who function as supervisors or educators should not engage in sexual activities or contact (including verbal, written, electronic, or physical 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.

2.07 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, written, electronic, or physical contact of a sexual nature.

2.08 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.

2.09 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.

2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues

- (a) Social workers should take adequate measures to discourage, prevent, expose, and correct the unethical conduct of colleagues, including unethical conduct using technology.
- (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, the NASW National Ethics Committee, 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

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

3.01 Supervision and Consultation

- (a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation (whether in-person or remotely) 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, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media.
- (d) Social workers who provide supervision should evaluate supervisees' performance in a manner that is fair and respectful.

3.02 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, including dual relationships that may arise while using social networking sites or other electronic media. Social work educators and field instructors are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

3.03 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.

3.04 Client Records

- (a) Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that documentation in electronic and paper 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 relevant laws, agency policies, and contracts.

3.05 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.

3.06 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.

3.07 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.

3.08 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.

3.09 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

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

4.01 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.

4.02 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.

4.03 Private Conduct

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

4.04 Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception

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

4.05 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.

4.06 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 these 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.

4.07 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.

4.08 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

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

5.01 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.

5.02 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 using electronic technology to facilitate evaluation or research, social workers should ensure that participants provide informed consent for the use of such technology. Social workers should assess whether participants are able to use the technology and, when appropriate, offer reasonable alternatives to participate in the evaluation or research.
- (g) 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.
- (h) 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.
- (i) Social workers should inform participants of their right to withdraw from evaluation and research at any time without penalty.
- (j) Social workers should take appropriate steps to ensure that participants in evaluation and research have access to appropriate supportive services.
- (k) Social workers engaged in evaluation or research should protect participants from unwarranted physical or mental distress, harm, danger, or deprivation.
- (l) 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.
- (m) 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.
- (n) Social workers who report evaluation and research results should protect participants' confidentiality by omitting identifying information unless proper consent has been obtained authorizing disclosure.
- (o) 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.
- (p) 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.
- (q) Social workers should educate themselves, their students, and their colleagues about responsible research practices.

6. Social Workers' Ethical Responsibilities to the Broader Society

NASW Code of Ethics: Ethical Standards

6.01 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.

6.02 Public Participation

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

6.03 Public Emergencies

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

6.04 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 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, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, or mental or physical ability.