

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

2013-2014

Welcome to the University of Missouri-St. Louis School of Social Work

The administration, faculty, and staff of the School of Social Work here at the University of Missouri-St. Louis are pleased that you have selected our social work master's program. As a metropolitan institution with a land-grant heritage the University of Missouri-St. Louis is strongly committed to teaching, research and public service. The University of Missouri-St. Louis plays a leadership role in advancing knowledge through its basic and applied research initiatives and programs. The University provides quality and affordable education at the baccalaureate, master's, doctoral, and professional degree levels. At the same time, it contributes to economic development throughout the St. Louis metropolitan region and the state of Missouri. As a School of Social Work in a metropolitan research, teaching, and service university, we have a special mission to work in partnership with other social work programs (public and private) in the region and state, and to collaborate with human service organizations and agencies throughout the state to improve the quality of life for all residents.

We in the School of Social Work are strongly committed to providing accessible, affordable, and high quality BSW and MSW degree programs, accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, to a diverse body of students. We are also committed to carrying out research and scholarship of the highest quality and significance, and to providing community service activities that serve to enhance the work and well-being of the people of the St. Louis metropolitan region, the state of Missouri, and the nation.

As you begin your graduate study with the School, we would like to provide you with this handbook which contains information needed to negotiate the program. The handbook contains the most relevant policies, regulations and procedures that will affect your life as a graduate student in the School and at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. It is our hope that the handbook, along with other materials that you have received from the Graduate School and other university sources, will help answer any of the questions that you may have. Please remember though that University, College, and School policies are continually changing and evolving and, as such, it will be wise to check relevant web sites and handouts on a regular basis. Please consult the appendix for helpful URLs.

Again, we are pleased that you have chosen to join our School and we welcome you to the MSW program.

Regards,

Lois Pierce

Lois H. Pierce, Ph.D.
Director, School of Social Work

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-ST. LOUIS

The University of Missouri-St. Louis is the land-grant research institution committed to meeting the diverse needs in the state's largest metropolitan community. It educates traditional and nontraditional students in undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs so that they may provide leadership in health professions, liberal and fine arts, science and technology, and metropolitan affairs such as business, education, and public policy. University research advances knowledge in all areas, and through outreach and public service, assists in solving, in particular, problems of the St. Louis region.

Academic programs are enriched through advanced technologies and partnerships that link UM-St. Louis to institutions and businesses locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. Its special commitment to partnership provides UM-St. Louis with a leadership role among public educational and cultural institutions in improving the region's quality of life, while its relations with two- and four-year colleges and universities in the St. Louis region promote seamless educational opportunities.

The School of Social Work supports the overall mission of the University of Missouri-St. Louis through its undergraduate and graduate programs in social work education, research, and service.

MISSION OF THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

The College of Arts and Sciences is the largest academic unit on the UM-St. Louis campus and plays a central role in executing each of the university's three missions: teaching, research, and service. The College is responsible for achieving the university's goal "that all baccalaureate graduates...should have a sound intellectual foundation in the liberal arts and sciences." Toward this end, the College offers baccalaureate degrees in each of its 14 academic departments and the School of Social Work, master's degrees in 13 units, and doctoral degrees in 8. Beyond this, it provides the general education for all pre-professional students with a particular emphasis on writing.

In addition to transmitting existing knowledge, the College produces new knowledge. College faculties, for example, conduct an array of basic and applied research. The total number of grants and published journal articles indicate that about 80% of the research at the university is generated in the College. The products of the College's research both enhance the university's teaching and contribute to society's well being.

The College is also an important leader in applying the university's land-grant mission to the urban/metropolitan community of St. Louis. It conducts applied research on urban and metropolitan issues, provides a wide range of noncredit programs in all academic disciplines, and extends credit programs and courses to those unable to come to campus during normal teaching times. In executing its service roles, the College works closely with the university's continuing education-outreach division and with the University of Missouri System's cooperative extension.

MISSION OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The School of Social Work engages students and faculty in professional education, research and service, advancing knowledge and competence to promote human and societal well-being. Within a collaborative learning environment, students are prepared as culturally competent, critically thinking leaders committed to social and economic justice and professional values and ethics.

The School's mission and goals are closely linked to those of UM-St. Louis, a land-grant comprehensive research university committed to meeting the diverse needs in the state's largest metropolitan geographical area.

Generalist practice is the basic conceptual approach for the BSW degree and forms the foundation for the MSW degree. Building on a liberal arts background, the social work curriculum develops knowledge and skills to understand complex social issues and the ability to assess and intervene directly and indirectly at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, and/or policy levels. In each phase, students are taught to think critically and analyze and evaluate their social work practice.

With a solid liberal arts and generalist foundation, students undertake advanced practice in the MSW concentration. Concentration level curricula are guided by the systems and strengths perspectives aimed at empowerment and capacity-building of at-risk populations. Students develop advanced knowledge and skills in family practice, gerontology or social work leadership and management. The choice of these particular concentrations was based on several years of background study, which included analyses of (a) the St. Louis region's needs; (b) existing St. Louis area social work programs; (c) advice from field instructors and the School's Advisory Board; (d) a scan of two dozen MSW programs around the nation; (e) an internal scan of UM-St. Louis curricular and faculty strengths; and (f) student interest.

Finally, the School of Social Work's mission is enhanced through significant partnerships and cooperative relationships with area educational institutions, human service organizations, policy makers, citizen action groups, and business organizations. Further, student learning is enriched through the growing use of shared educational resources, and information and distance learning technologies that are generated in collaboration with other public and private social work programs in the metropolitan region and the state.

GOALS OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

The goals of the M.S.W. program of the University of Missouri- St. Louis are to:

- 1. Prepare professional social workers with the knowledge, skills, values and ethics for effective social work practice.** Students learn to engage in professional behavior, to evaluate that behavior and adjust their behavior to engage in more effective practice. They are educated to intervene – at individual, family, group, organization, community, and policy levels, and using generalist and problem solving perspectives, integrate social work knowledge and skills with an understanding of social issues from local, national, and global perspectives.
- 2. Prepare social work students to analyze and address dynamic issues and challenges facing diverse populations and to promote social justice and positive social change.** The School educates graduate level social work students for advanced practice with children, older adults, and families, and for leadership roles in community organizations. Students gain understanding of social problems and social issues, and how to build capacity and provide resources and opportunities, especially to populations affected by poverty, violence, and/or discrimination. Students are prepared to move into leadership positions, where they will promote social change and economic and social justice.
- 3. Provide a professional social work education to a diverse body of students, who desire a public university education in social work in St. Louis.** Students are offered flexible educational opportunities, including course schedules and practicum placements that acknowledge their traditional or non-traditional student status. Diversity is embraced, as faculty and staff work with students individually, in groups, and in classes to maximize learning and professional development.
- 4. Prepare students to conduct and utilize research to respond effectively to dynamic social contexts, issues and problems found in social work practice.** The promotion of life-long learning – including continuing professional education, on-going assessment of practice skills, critical analysis of economic and social structures and policies, and possible doctoral education – occurs through coursework, faculty mentoring, and continuing education programs offered by the School.

5. **Provide educational opportunities and diverse learning environments in partnership with public and private graduate social work, and related programs.** Students have opportunities to earn certificates in specialized areas, to participate in a university consortium for field education program among all St. Louis social work schools, to engage in special learning experiences (e.g., practicum placements for students interested in aging), to interact with students elsewhere in the state through distance learning, to access the shared library resources of the majority of institutions of higher education in the state, to participate in courses in other departments and institutions, and to participate in scholarly and professional conferences and other learning opportunities.
6. **Contribute to solving local, regional, and global problems and to promoting social change through teaching, research, and service.** The graduate faculty of the School of Social Work has expertise in social work education, research and scientific inquiry, micro and macro practice, and policy development. In their work, they focus on excellence in teaching, productive research agendas, and service to local, national, and international organizations. Furthermore, faculty and staff work closely with colleagues and institutions in St. Louis and elsewhere to maximize their capabilities and impact in teaching, research, and service.

These goals are consistent with the land-grant public service mission of the University, the MSW feasibility study, and the educational mission statement of CSWE.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program in the School of Social Work at University of Missouri-St. Louis is designed to prepare students to be competent professional social work practitioners. Graduates will have the knowledge, skills and values for direct social work practice with individuals, families, or older adults, or the knowledge, skills and values to effectively manage and lead non-profit and public human service agencies. Social justice principles will guide graduates in their practice at all levels of intervention particularly with persons who are oppressed because of their color, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation or physical or mental ability.

The MSW must be completed in four years. Full-time students will be able to complete the program in two years. Part-time students can complete the program in four years.

The MSW program requires 60 hours of graduate coursework. However, a student who has earned a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) within the past five years or who has taken graduate coursework, comparable to that required for our program, in another social work program or another department at UM – St. Louis or another university may receive credit toward the 60-hour requirement or, by passing a test-out exam, have content waived.

The MSW has two levels of study. In the first year, students complete 30 graduate credit hours of coursework, identified as *foundation* content. In the second year of study, students complete another 30 credit hours of coursework in their *concentrations*.

The three *concentrations* offered in the MSW program at UM-St. Louis are:

- Family Practice
- Social Work Leadership and Management
- Gerontology

Full time students complete practicums in their first and second years of study, although students entering with a BSW are exempted from the first-year practicum. Each practicum requires 300 hours or approximately two and one half days per week in an agency for one semester. The MSW program curriculum at UM-St. Louis was developed in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards developed by the Council on Social Work Education.

ADMISSION

Admission to the MSW program is based on measures of academic preparation. To apply, applicants must submit the following materials: (a) a Graduate School application, (b) a School of Social Work application, (c) official transcripts from all colleges and/or universities attended, (d) two written essays following guidelines provided in the social work application, (e) three recommendation forms, one from a professor in the applicant's undergraduate major field of study, one from a work or volunteer supervisor, and a third from another professional source not related to, or a friend of, the applicant, (f) a statement regarding the applicant's mental health and past criminal activity, (g) a signed copy of the Essential Abilities for Social Workers, and the NASW Code of Ethics indicating the student understands and agrees to follow professional social work ethics (h) in the case of international applicants for whom English is not the native language, TOEFL scores, and (i) a nonrefundable application fee. These requirements are explained in more detail in the following sections. The GRE is not required.

Applicants for admission to the Master of Social Work program must apply for admission to the university's Graduate School and simultaneously to the School of Social Work. Only applicants who have earned at least a baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited institution of higher education in the United States or abroad will be admitted. Admission to the master's program in social work requires that applicants be jointly admitted by the Graduate School and by the School of Social Work.

Admission Requirements

The faculty of the School of Social Work within the guidelines, policies, and regulations of the Graduate School, has established the following requirements for the admission to the master's program in social work. The evaluation of application materials and decisions regarding the admission of applicants to the master's program are the responsibilities of the faculty and are implemented through an Admissions Committee. Members of this committee review and monitor admission policies, criteria, procedures, and practices in the baccalaureate [BSW] and master's [MSW] programs.

Applicants to the Master of Social Work degree program must meet the following specific requirements:

Applicants must have earned a baccalaureate degree or in the case of international applicants, the equivalent of a baccalaureate degree, from a regionally accredited institution of higher education. The University's Graduate School and its Office of International Student Services inform the School of Social Work that an applicant has met this requirement.

1. An applicant's baccalaureate degree must show evidence of a liberal arts education and should include substantial content or coursework in traditional liberal arts areas including content in humanities (e.g., art history and art appreciation, literature, philosophy and logic, music, theater), social and behavioral sciences (e.g., anthropology, history, communication, political science, psychology, sociology) physical and natural sciences (e.g., astronomy, atmospheric science, biology, chemistry, physics, geology), and mathematics [e.g., mathematics, statistics, computer science). In addition, an applicant is required to have content in human biology and to have successfully completed a course in introductory statistics. An applicant who does not have adequate liberal arts content or a statistics course must acquire such prior to matriculating in the program.
2. Applicants must meet all the general admission requirements of the University of Missouri-St. Louis' Graduate School and the School of Social Work. Any student who receives graduate credit for a course at UM-St. Louis must have been admitted to the Graduate School in one of the categories specified for admission: "Regular," "Restricted," or "Provisional." The Graduate School requires that a student admitted to a graduate program as a "Regular" student (unconditional admission status) have both a cumulative undergraduate grade point average and a major field grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.00 scale. The School of Social Work also requires the same cumulative grade point average for regular or unconditional admission to the Master of Social Work program.

3. International students whose native language is not English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language [TOEFL] examination and score 550 or above.
4. Applicants must submit three recommendation forms from persons who can address the applicant's academic ability and potential for graduate education and professional social work practice. At least one letter should be from a professor in the applicant's undergraduate major field of study (if the degree was completed within the last five years, two recommendations should be from former professors), one from a work or volunteer supervisor, and a third from another professional source not related to, or a friend of, the applicant who can describe the applicant's potential for professional practice.
5. Applicants must submit written statements responding to two specific essays that focus on: (1) their career goals, (2) their thoughts on the issues of oppression and discrimination in society. Instructions for writing these essays are provided to each applicant as a part of the application packet. Focus should reflect both strong content and good writing mechanics.
6. Applicants are required to sign a statement regarding mental health and past criminal activity. These are not reasons to preclude an applicant from admission, however, they do allow the program to be sensitive to the unique needs and barriers some applicants may encounter as they progress through the program, particularly in the field placement experience.

Regular Program Option

The School of Social Work's Admissions Committee evaluates applicants for admission to the MSW program. The Committee's evaluation or assessment protocol involves an analysis and weighting of all admission materials. Specifically, all applicants to the program are assigned a numerical score on several admission variables: baccalaureate degree; cumulative grade point average; recommendation forms and letters of recommendation; written personal statement requiring responses to two specific essay questions; liberal arts education; human biology content, introductory statistics course, work and volunteer experience, and faculty assessment and judgment. An applicant's score serves as the basis for ranking applicants. Admission decisions are made in accord with the Committee's evaluation and ranking system until available program slots are filled.

In instances where the admissibility of an applicant is not clear-cut (i.e., in those cases where several applicants have marginal academic credentials but other strong assets), the applicant will be seen in a personal interview by the Admissions Committee. Based on an individual applicant's interview, the Committee makes a decision to admit or deny admission. The decision of the Admissions Committee is final. It is worthwhile noting, that in making admission decisions, the Committee strives to build a socially and culturally diverse student body.

When all admissions decisions have been made by the School and approved by the Graduate School, the Office of Graduate Admissions informs applicants, generally by mail, of the School's decisions.

Advanced Standing Program Option

To avoid redundancy and/or repetition of social work content, the School provides an advanced standing (AS) option in the MSW program to qualified applicants. As noted previously, eligibility requirements for this option require that an applicant have:

- a baccalaureate degree in social work awarded by a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education within five years prior to admission to the master's program;
- a cumulative undergraduate grade point average and a social work major grade point average of 3.00 or better on a 4.00-point scale;

- a grade of B (not B-) or better in equivalent undergraduate social work courses for which advanced standing in the master's program is requested; and
- has been admitted to the Graduate School and the MSW program in the "Regular Student" (unconditional) admissions category. Eligibility for advanced standing is determined by the MSW program director and/or the advanced concentration coordinators prior to an applicant's initial enrollment in the master's program.

Advanced standing credits may be awarded up to a maximum of 24 hours for the courses listed in Table 1. Students not eligible for advanced standing can avoid content redundancy by successfully passing place-out or wavier examinations [see below] for some foundation courses. Successful passage of a place out or waiver examination eliminates a course but not the credit hours and, as a result, a student must enroll for an equivalent number of credit hours in some other graduate course in or out of the MSW program. Foundation social work practice courses and field instruction courses are not subject to waivers.

Table 1. Baccalaureate Social Work Courses Eligible for Advanced Standing Credit**

BSW Course /Title	MSW Course Equivalent	Credit
SW 3510--Human Behavior/Social Environment	SW 5500	3
SW 3210--Social Policy and Social Services	SW 5200	3
SW 4110--Practice w/Individuals & Groups	SW 5100	3
SW 4300--Practice w/Organizations & Com.	SW 5300	3
SW 3700—Diversity and Social Justice	SW 5700	3
SW 3410--Research Design in Social Work	SW 5410	3
SW 4800/4850--Field Experience I and 2	SW 5800	6
Possible AS Credits		24

**Only those baccalaureate social work courses [as shown in Table 1 or their equivalents] that received a final course grade of B or better are eligible for waivers of credit in the advanced standing [AS] program. Courses and credits hours earned at another CSWE accredited graduate program in social work may be accepted for graduate credit at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Such acceptance, however, must be in accordance with established policies and procedures of the advanced standing [AS] program and the Graduate School. Requests of this nature will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

In compliance with Council on Social Work Education's [CSWE] Accreditation Standard 5.2, the University of Missouri-St. Louis' Undergraduate, Graduate and Professional Catalog/Bulletin contains the following statement: **"academic credit cannot be given for life experience and previous work experience, in whole or in part, in lieu of field practicum or foundation year courses"**. Thus, the School of Social Work will not under any circumstances, grant academic credit to any MSW program student for life experience and/or previous work experience, in place of the field practicum or of other courses in the master's program professional foundation curriculum.

TRANSFER OF CREDIT POLICY

According to the University's Graduate School, the final two-thirds (67%) of the courses in a master's degree program must be completed in residence at the University (see the 2009-2010 UM-St. Louis Bulletin under Residence Requirement.). In view of this policy, the School of Social Work can accept up to 20 hours of graduate credit from another regionally accredited college or university (exceptions to the one-third limit may be granted by the Dean of the Graduate School). However, through an allowable process of combining course/credit transfers and courses waivers, the School may be able to accept a full first year (30 semester credit hours or the equivalent) from another graduate program in social work that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Accepting first year coursework from any other graduate program in social work assumes, of course, that the coursework is comparable to and

consistent with coursework in the MSW program's professional foundation curriculum. Transfer credit may be granted only for regular graduate courses for which a grade of A or B, or the equivalent is achieved. Graduate degree credit may be allowed for graduate institutes and workshops only if they are offered by an accredited public college or university. All graduate institute and workshop credit is considered transfer credit by the Graduate School and only three hours of transfer credit in this category is permitted.

A student who does not possess a baccalaureate degree in social work but who has had previous undergraduate coursework in social work from a CSWE accredited program, may be given a waiver from some of the professional foundation courses i.e., Social Policy and Services (SW 5200), Research Methods and Analysis 1 (SW 5410), Social Work and Human Service Organizations (SW 5350), Diversity and Social Justice (SW 5700), and Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (SW 3510) and allowed to take elective courses instead. Students must received a grade of B or higher in all prior courses in social work in order to qualify for waiver or exemption credit.

A student from a non-accredited undergraduate social work program and a student who has taken comparable (or similar) coursework in other baccalaureate or master's degree programs may be exempted or waived from some of the courses in the professional foundation curriculum by passing a series of proficiency examinations. To be eligible to take a particular proficiency examination, a student must have received a grade of B or higher in a similar course. Receiving satisfactory and/ or passing grades on proficiency examinations does not reduce the total number of semester credit hours needed to complete the Master of Social Work degree program. It does, however, give a student an opportunity to take additional elective course work as part of his or her program of study.

In any event, course waivers i.e., possession of a baccalaureate degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program, passing of proficiency examinations, transfer of credits, or some combination therein, with or without stipulations, are made on a case-by-case basis. Decisions about course waivers are based upon a number of important factors including (a) date(s) when previous academic work was completed [note: courses used as a basis for waiver requests cannot exceed the Graduate School's six-year rule], (b) currency of the course(s) serving as the basis of the waiver, (c) the student's professional experience and/or training since the completion of coursework, and (d) the student's career goals and objectives.

Field Education

Field education is an integral part of the MSW program. Students are required to take three field education courses and one field education seminar. Graduate Field Practicum I (SW5800), or the foundation practicum, is a 300 hour/4 credit hour field education experience focused on generalist social work practice. Students also complete a two credit hour Foundation Field Seminar (SW5801) course in conjunction with this practicum. Completion or concurrent enrollment in all foundation coursework is required before students can begin this field experience. Students **must** attend two foundation practicum planning workshops the semester prior to beginning the foundation practicum, and must apply and be approved before they are allowed to begin practicum.

Graduate Field Practicum II (SW6800) and Graduate Field Practicum III (SW6850) are each 300 hour/3credit hour field experiences taken in conjunction with classroom concentration coursework. Students select placements within their area of concentration (Family Practice, Social Work Leadership and Management or Gerontology) and in conjunction with their career goals. Students **must** attend a practicum planning workshop the semester prior to beginning the concentration field experience. The field education manual is available on the School of Social Work web site.

Foundation Content

In the first year of graduate study, the curriculum emphasis is on generalist social work practice. Students take courses, which provide a common base of knowledge across all practice settings and populations. Students gain the basic knowledge and skills to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities and are able to apply this generalist perspective to advanced social work practice.

Upon completion of these 30 foundation credit hours, students will have the core knowledge, skills, and values of the profession to move into an area of specialization based on their career interests. Students cannot proceed to their concentration choice without having successfully completed most foundation courses. Full-time students will complete the foundation in one year; part-time students will complete the foundation coursework in two years.

It is anticipated that students who successfully complete the foundation courses will have gained and will be able to demonstrate (in observable ways) a measurable degree of achievement of the following underlined competencies. Each competency is followed by ways each will be observed and measured.

Foundation Competencies

EP 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth.

- Students evidence the skills of advocacy by ***advocating for client access to the services of social work***. This is operationalized through students' recognition of the role of social workers as advocates, their ability to identify social movements, key figures/leaders, and major themes in the development of community practice, and apply knowledge of policy advocacy to empower vulnerable populations.
- Students ***practice personal reflection and self-correction to assure continual professional development*** developing an understanding of the self and the use of self in the context of practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Students learn to ***attend to professional roles and boundaries***, developing a sense of professional awareness in working with individuals, families and groups.
- Student ***demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior, appearance, and communication***, while working in communities and in organizations.
- By demonstrating the ability to extrapolate knowledge from the professional literature for ongoing professional development and commitment to the social work profession, the program believes that students will comprehend and internalize the expectation they should ***engage in career-long-learning***.
- The effective ***use of supervision and consultation*** are necessary for continued professionalism and development, and students are expected to understand the function of supervision and utilize it to maximize the quality of their practice.

EP 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law. Social workers

- Students become sensitive to their own values and biases and understand the need to adhere to professional standards of practice in work with individuals learning to ***recognize and manage personal values in a way that allows professional values to guide practice***.
- Students are able to describe and ***apply major components and standards of the NASW Code of Ethics*** to ethical decision making in social work practice. They are able to demonstrate an understanding of ethical dilemmas facing social work practitioners and researchers and are able to take decisions based on ethical principles.
- Students will understand the complexities involved in the application of ethical principles to social work practice in real-world situations, ***and applying strategies of ethical reasoning*** they will learn to ***tolerate ambiguity in resolving ethical conflicts*** as they seek to ***arrive at principled decisions***.

EP 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information.

- Students will gain the skills needed to identify, synthesize, critically assess, and analyze relevant information to inform social practice by ***distinguishing, appraising, and integrating multiple sources of knowledge, including research-based knowledge, and practice wisdom.***
- Students will ***analyze models of assessment, prevention, intervention, and evaluation*** and utilize assessment findings to develop appropriate interventions across all practice levels.
- Students will ***demonstrate effective oral and written communication in working with individuals, families, groups and organizations communities and colleagues*** through oral presentations and, written assignments in classes and in field.

EP 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation. Social workers appreciate that as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

- To ***recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create or enhance privilege and power***, students will be able to analyze the effects of age, race, gender, social class, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, and physical and mental ability on a individual's life course and the relevant implications for social work practice. They will develop an understanding of how the forces of oppression and inequality work through societal forces, including social policies, to weaken the power of disadvantaged and oppressed people and their access to resources.
- Students will discuss and explore community demographics and resources that may reflect a culture's structure and values and social influences on their own perceptions, developing a self-awareness of their attitudes and values that affect their practice with diverse groups. They will ***gain sufficient self-awareness to eliminate the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse groups.***
- Students will be able to assess the impact of life-span issues on social and economic opportunities and vice versa, demonstrate an awareness of how intersecting diversity factors affect world-view and life experiences, ***and communicate their understanding of the importance of difference in shaping life experiences.***
- Students view their clients as experts about their own life situations and view ***themselves as learners and engage those with whom they work as informants.***

EP 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice. Social workers

- ***Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination*** by demonstrating an understanding of social and political forms of oppression and discrimination, developing a fundamental understanding of the social histories and current status of diverse groups and the institutions that influence diverse groups' experiences in the United States and/or contribute to the inequitable distribution of resources.
- Students will increase awareness of social justice issues, develop skills and knowledge that will facilitate effective practice, and become allies to oppressed groups in ***advocating to advance human rights and social and economic justice.***

EP 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service

delivery. Social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

- Students will develop the ability to formulate and investigate research questions to identify risk factors and intervention approaches **and use practice experience to inform scientific inquiry.**
- Students will become familiar with the process of dissemination of research findings for the development of evidence-based practice models and will **use research evidence to inform practice.**

EP 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development

- Students will gain a basic understanding of major theories of development as well as of social systems theory, the strengths perspective, and a person in environment approach, and will **utilize such conceptual frameworks to guide the processes of assessment, intervention, and evaluation.**
- Students will critique the range of theories of human development to assess and critically apply the knowledge gained through them to **understand the person and the environment.** Utilizing the knowledge acquired through the liberal arts perspective, and the influence of biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual factors, students will understand the relationship of micro, mezzo, and macro variables in human functioning

EP 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development.

- Students will **analyze** major social and welfare policies, discuss how these have changed over time, and be able to **formulate and advocate for policies that advance social well-being.**
- Students will view themselves and learners and engage those with whom they work as informants, **collaborating with colleagues and clients for effective policy action** and practice skills that advance social and economic justice.

EP 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

Social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

- **Students will use relevant information and frameworks to critically assess the context of client functioning and funding, continuously discovering, appraising, and attending to changing locales, populations, scientific and technological developments, and emerging societal trends to provide relevant services.**
- Students will evidence leadership in managing organizations, working in communities, and engaging in policy practice to **promote sustainable changes in service delivery and practice to improve the quality of social services.**

EP 2.1.10(a)–(d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances, evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

EP 2.1.10(a)

- Using social work knowledge and with self awareness, students will understand the unique considerations for engagement to ***substantively and affectively prepare for action with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.***
- Students will evidence ***empathy*** and utilize skills of empathic communication, authenticity, active listening and ***other interpersonal skills*** in relationship building with client systems.
- Working with clients, students will ***develop a mutually agreed on focus of work and desired outcomes***

EP 2.1.10(b)

- Students will develop multidimensional assessment skills including the ***assessment of strengths and limitations within client*** systems.
- Students will work with client systems to identify areas of concern or need to be explored in the social work helping process, ***developing a mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes***
- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the theoretical basis and scope and methods of design in conducting social work research, ***collecting, organizing, and interpreting client data*** to effectively inform practice.
- Students will work with client systems to identify and ***develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives*** and ***select appropriate intervention strategies***

EP 2.1.10(c)

- Students will identify needs and ***initiate actions to achieve organizational goals***
- Students ***will identify appropriate models and/or methods to implement prevention interventions that enhance client capacities***
- Students will be able to implement appropriate intervention strategies that ***enhance client capacities to resolve problems*** and will allow them to
- ***negotiate, mediate, and advocate for clients.***
- Students will be able to demonstrate skills that ***facilitate transitions and endings*** as they terminate relationships with clients.

EP 2.1.10(d)

- Students will learn the various approaches to ***critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate interventions*** that can be applied within varying practice settings.

Concentration Options

At the time that students complete the Admissions packet they are asked to identify their career interests as they apply to the three concentrations offered in the MSW program. Each concentration requires completion of 30 hours of coursework, including 6 hours of advanced field practicum.

Family Practice Concentration

Students wishing to work primarily with individuals and families will elect the Family Practice Concentration. Upon graduation, the new MSW will have the knowledge and skills to work in child welfare agencies, family service agencies, mental health clinics, health-care organizations, family violence service agencies, substance abuse prevention and treatment programs or correctional organizations.

The following tables summarize the Family Practice concentration curriculum for full-time and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

Family Practice Concentration Full-Time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
<i>Fall</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3)• SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3)• SW 5350 Social Work & Human Service Organizations (3)• SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice(3)• SW 5300 Community Practice and Social Change (3)	<i>Fall</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW 6160 Advanced Practice Strategies Across the Life Span (3)• SW 6200 Family Policy (3)• SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days• SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3)• Elective (3)
<i>Winter</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW 5410 Research Methods & Analysis I (3)• SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3)• SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2)• SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4)• Elective (3)	<i>Winter</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3)• SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3)• SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22/wk: 3 days• Elective (6)

Family Practice Concentration Part-Time Students			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5500 Social Work & Human Service Organizations (3) SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5350 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3) SW 5300 Community Practice & Social Change (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6160 Advanced Practice Strategies Across the Life Span (3) Elective(3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) Elective (3)
Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3) SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3) SW 5410 Research Methods & Analysis I (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3) SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2) SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6200 Family Policy (3) Elective (3) SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3) SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) Elective (3)

The Family Practice concentration competencies, which are operationalized below, were developed after consideration of the knowledge, skills, and values that faculty believe are needed to be effective MSW family practitioners.

COMPETENCY 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Advanced family practice social workers recognize the importance of professional use of self in relationships, the person-in-environment and strengths perspectives, and adherence to ethical guidelines and social work values.

COMPETENCY 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about ethical issues, legal issues and shifting mores that affect their relationships with clients.

COMPETENCY 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Advanced family practice social workers understand and differentiate among multiple theories and practice methods. They are able to evaluate how theories and methods relate to clients and client systems within their environmental context. They regularly reflect on their own assumptions and how those affect practice.

COMPETENCY 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about many forms of diversity and difference and how these affect professional relationships and client's presenting problems. Advanced practitioners understand how dimensions of diversity affect (a) explanations of illness, (b) help-seeking behaviors, and (c) healing practices. They understand how clinical practice can be culture bound.

COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Advanced family practice social workers understand how economic, social and cultural factors challenge clients and client systems. They understand the stigma and shame that face many clients who seek help. They also understand strategies for advancing human rights and social and economic justice in many contexts.

COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-based practice interventions, best practices and the evidence-based research process.

COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Advanced family practice social workers understand how to differentially apply theories of human behavior and the social environment. They are familiar with diagnostic classification systems used in a comprehensive assessment. They understand how sociocultural contexts influence diagnoses and practice interventions.

COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Advanced family practice social workers understand the connection between clients, practice and both public and organizational policy. They understand how legislation, policies, and program services are developed and funded and are able to advocate for effective policies that promote social well-being.

COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to the contexts that shape practice

Advanced family practice social workers are knowledgeable about how relational, organizational, and community systems may affect clients. They anticipate and react to evolving cultural, technological, geographical, political, legal, economic and environmental contexts.

COMPETENCY 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

Advanced family practice involves the dynamic, interactive and reciprocal processes of engagement, multidimensional assessment, intervention and practice evaluation at multiple levels. Advanced practitioners have a theoretically informed knowledge base that allows them to practice effectively with individuals, families and groups.

Students interested in developing expertise in working with women may elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies offered at UM-St. Louis in addition to their social work concentration. Students wishing to work with older adults--either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity may elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology, although the Gerontology Concentration is usually more appropriate, and students interested in agency leadership roles should consider taking courses in the Non-profit Leadership and Management program.

Social Work Leadership and Management

Students wishing to work in human service agencies and organizations as program planners, policy-makers, supervisors, administrators, or community development specialists may elect the Social Work Leadership and Management concentration.

The following tables summarize the Social Work Leadership and Management concentration for full- and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

Social Work Leadership and Management Concentration Full-Time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
<i>Fall</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3) • SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment(3) • SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice(3) • SW 5350 Social Work and Human Service Organizations (3) • SW 5300 Community Practice & Social Change (3) 	<i>Fall</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3) • SW 6300 Leadership and Management in Non-Profit Organizations (3) • SW 6250 Social and Economic Development Policy (3) • SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days • Elective (3)
<i>Winter</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3) • SW 5410 Research Methods & Analysis I (3) • SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2) • SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4) • Elective (3) 	<i>Winter</i> (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 6311, 6312, 6313 (A,B,C) Management Issues in Non-Profit Organizations (1 credit each= 3 credit hours) • SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3) • SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22hr/wk: 3 days • Elective (6)

Social Work Leadership and Management Concentration Part-Time Students			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Fall (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3) SW 5100 Generalist Social work Practice (3) SW 5300 Community Practice & Social Change (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3) SW 5350 Social Work and Human Service Organizations (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6250 Social and Economic Development Policy (3) Elective (3) 	Fall (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) SW 6300 Leadership & Management in Non-Profit Organizations (3) Elective (3)
Winter (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3) SW 5410 Research Methods & Analysis I (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3) SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2) SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I(4) 	Winter (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6311, 6312, 6313 Management Issues in Non-Profit Organizations (3) Elective (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3) SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) Elective (3)

MSW students pursuing this concentration have the opportunity to complete the Graduate Certificate in Non-profit Management and Leadership, which is an 18 credit hour program. In addition, students may also consider a joint MSW/MPPA (Master's in Policy Administration) degree.

The core competencies that students in the Leadership and Management concentration are expected to achieve are listed below.

COMPETENCY 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize the importance of professional conduct and of person/professional development for organizational and community practice.

COMPETENCY 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management ascribe to the values and ethics advanced by NASW and CSWE for professional conduct and, thus, engage in ethical decision-making in working with communities and organizations. They understand the use of the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles for arriving at principled decisions concerning social justice and human rights. They also understand that work within complex systems can generate conflicting priorities and ambiguities that require professional value-based judgments.

COMPETENCY 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management approach community and organizational problem-solving using logical, scientific and reasoned frameworks for analysis and synthesis toward intervention.

COMPETENCY 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice
 Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize diversity, including age, race, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion, political ideology,

immigration status, sex and sexual orientation; and how these differences can influence oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as privilege and power in communities and organizations.

COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management are knowledgeable about the interconnections between oppression and theories/strategies to promote social justice and human rights. They adhere to the principles of human rights advanced through national constitutional laws and through international declarations of human rights, including the seven declarations and conventions listed in the IFSW/IASSW Ethics in Social Work, Statement of Principles.

COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management utilize quantitative and qualitative research to understand the nature of communities and organizations and the best practices to improve well-being in these macro systems. They integrate members of communities and organizations in the process and outcome evaluations of macro system interventions.

COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize the central importance of human relationships, including the interconnection between people and place, between people and micro and macro social systems. They also appreciate the unique contributions of cultural, environmental, urban, and rural contexts to organizations and communities

COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize that social work is a non-partisan political profession, and that political processes and policies affect the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of individuals, families, communities and organization, as well as social work practice

COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to contexts that shape practice

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management recognize and respond to the changing landscape of public, nonprofit, and for-profit organizations that comprise the social service sector, as well as to the social, economic, political, and environmental contexts that shape these organizations and community life.

COMPETENCY 2.1.10(a)–(d) Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Social workers in Advanced Practice in Leadership and Management engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with organizations and communities and their constituencies. They understand participatory methods and the importance of the worth and dignity of persons in all engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation efforts. Develop mutually agreed-on focus of work and desired outcomes.

Gerontology

Students wishing to work with older adults—either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity—will elect the Gerontology concentration.

M.S.W. students can focus their attention on developing direct practice skills to work with the older adults and their families as professional case managers or develop administrative skills, allowing them to work as administrators of long-term care facilities, adult day care centers, respite programs, area agencies on aging, the Division of Health & Senior Services, and others.

The following tables summarize the Gerontology Concentration Curriculum for full-time and part-time students. Three to six hours may be taken in the summer.

Gerontology Concentration Full-time Students	
Year 1	Year 2
Fall (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3) • SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3) • SW 5350 Social Work & Human Service Organizations (3) • SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3) • SW 5300 Community Practice & Social Change (3) 	Fall (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 6443 Health Care Policy (3) • SW 6150 Theory & Practice with Families (3) • SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3) • SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II (3) 300 hours/22 hrs/week: 3 days • Elective (3)
Winter (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW 5200 Social Policy and Social Services (3) • SW 5410 Research Methods & Analysis I (3) • SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2) • SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4) • Elective (3) 	Winter (15 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SW6120 Theory and Practice with the Older Adults (3) • SW6400 Program & Practice Evaluation (3) • SW6850 Graduate Field Practicum III (3) 300 hours/22 hr/week: 3 days • Elective (6)

Gerontology Concentration Part-Time Students			
Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5100 Generalist Social Work Practice (3) SW 5700 Diversity and Social Justice (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5300 Community Practice & Social Change (3) SW 5500 Foundations of Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3) 	Fall (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6150 Theory and Practice with Families (3) SW 6443 Health Care Policy (3) Elective (3) 	Fall (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6800 Graduate Field Practicum II, 300 hours/22 hrs/week= 3 days (3) Elective (3)
Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5200 Social Policy & Social Services (3) SW 5410 Research Method I (3) SW 5350 Social Work & Human Service Organizations (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 5450 Research Methods & Analysis II (3) SW 5801 Graduate Field Practicum Seminar (2) SW 5800 Graduate Field Practicum I (4) 	Winter (6 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elective (3) SW 6120 Theory and Practice with Older Adults (3) 	Winter (9 credit hours) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SW 6400 Practice and Program Evaluation (3) SW 6850 Graduate Field Practicum III, 300 hours/22 hrs/week = 3 days (3) Elective (3)

Each of the core competencies for Gerontology is operationalized through the following practice behaviors. These are described in the section below along with where and how we measure student competency in the curriculum.

COMPETENCY 2.1.1 Identify as a professional social worker and conduct oneself accordingly

Gerontological social workers serve as representatives of the profession, its mission, and its core values. They know the profession's history. Gerontological social workers commit themselves to the profession's enhancement and to their own professional conduct and growth. Gerontological social workers address personal biases regarding aging, and they work to dispel myths surrounding aging.

COMPETENCY 2.1.2 Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice

Gerontological social workers have an obligation to conduct themselves ethically and to engage in ethical decision-making. Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about the value base of the profession, its ethical standards and relevant law.

COMPETENCY 2.1.3 Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments

Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and reasoned discernment. They use critical thinking augmented by creativity and curiosity. Critical thinking also requires the synthesis and communication of relevant information including the application of concepts and theories of aging.

COMPETENCY 2.1.4 Engage diversity and difference in practice

Gerontological social workers understand how diversity characterizes and shapes the human experience and is critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

Gerontological social workers appreciate that as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power and acclaim.

COMPETENCY 2.1.5 Advance human rights and social and economic justice

Each person, regardless of position in society, has basic human rights, such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Gerontological social workers recognize the global interconnections of oppression and are knowledgeable about theories of justice and strategies to promote human and civil rights. Gerontological social work incorporates social justice practices in organizations, institutions, and society to ensure that these basic human rights are distributed equitably and without prejudice.

COMPETENCY 2.1.6 Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research

Gerontological social workers use practice experience to inform research, employ evidence-based interventions, evaluate their own practice, and use research findings to improve practice, policy, and social service delivery. Gerontological social workers comprehend quantitative and qualitative research and understand scientific and ethical approaches to building knowledge.

COMPETENCY 2.1.7 Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment

Gerontological social workers are knowledgeable about human behavior across the life course; the range of social systems in which people live; and the ways social systems promote or deter people in maintaining or achieving health and well-being. Gerontological social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development.

COMPETENCY 2.1.8 Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services

Gerontological social work practitioners understand that policy affects service delivery, and they actively engage in policy practice. Gerontological social workers know the history and current structures of social policies and services; the role of policy in service delivery; and the role of practice in policy development. Gerontological social workers are able to apply the skills of advocacy to mold policies that are responsive to the needs of older people.

COMPETENCY 2.1.9 Respond to the contexts that shape practice

Gerontological social workers are informed, resourceful, and proactive in responding to evolving organizational, community, and societal contexts at all levels of practice. Gerontological social workers recognize that the context of practice is dynamic, and use knowledge and skill to respond proactively.

COMPETENCY 2.1.10 Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities

Professional practice involves the dynamic and interactive processes of engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation at multiple levels. Gerontological social workers have the knowledge and skills to practice with older individuals, their families, groups, organizations and communities. Practice knowledge includes identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-based interventions designed to achieve client goals; using research and technological advances, evaluating program outcomes and practice effectiveness; developing, analyzing, advocating, and providing leadership for policies and services; and promoting social and economic justice.

Students wishing to work with older adults -- either in direct practice or in an administrative capacity may also elect to pursue the Graduate Certificate in Gerontology. Students interested primarily in administering programs for older adults are encouraged to pursue a Graduate Certificate in Nonprofit Management and Leadership.

Certificates

In addition to selecting one of the three concentrations, students may also choose to complete a certificate in a related area such as Gerontology, Non-Profit Management and Leadership, or Women's and Gender Studies. A complete listing of certificate programs and requirements can be found at http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin/degree_programs.html

Student Organization

The Student Social Work Association (SSWA) is the campus organization that is officially recognized by the School as representing the collective interest of all social work students. It is also the established structural means by which students have opportunities to participate in the ongoing formulation and modification of School and/or programmatic policies, procedures, and practices -- especially those that affect their academic and professional development and well being.

A faculty advisor provides ongoing support and assistance to the SSWA. In addition to providing information, networking, and socialization opportunities for students, the SSWA participates in many community service projects. The SSWA meets regularly during the course of the academic year. Meeting notices are posted. Additionally, members of the SSWA are invited to serve on School committees (except the Personnel Committee).

POLICIES PERTAINING TO STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Students enrolled in the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the School of Social Work should be aware of their obligations and rights as students. Students assume an obligation to behave in a manner that is compatible with the institution as an educational enterprise and with the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics. Students also have the right of protection from actions of others that are prejudiced, unfair, arbitrary or capricious.

Student obligations

The Code of Student Conduct is found in Section 200.010 of the University of Missouri Collected Rules and Regulations (CRR). A copy of the code may also be found in the Appendix of the UM-St. Louis Bulletin (<http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin/>). The Code clearly delineates conduct for which a student can be sanctioned or disciplined including cheating, plagiarism, forgery of documents, disruption of university activities, and actual or attempted theft of computer time. Procedures to be followed once a student has been accused of violating the Code of Student Conduct are found in Section 200.020 of the CCR and the Appendix of the Bulletin. The procedures for disciplinary action have been put in place to insure insofar as possible and practical that the requirements of procedural due process in student conduct proceedings will be fulfilled by the university.

UM - St. Louis and the School of Social Work procedures for dismissal from the program

The Code of Student Conduct clearly delineates conduct for which a student can be sanctioned or disciplined. In addition, sanctions may be imposed on any student in the School of Social Work who has been found to have violated the professional expectations and standards described in the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics.

Special efforts are made in the School's two academic programs to identify problematic student performance as early as possible. In most instances, the review of a student's academic and/or professional performance begins in the classroom. If the instructor has concerns, these are shared with the student and the student's advisor. If the problem cannot be resolved at that level, the MSW program director will become involved and, finally, the School's Personnel and Policy Committee (PPC) may be asked to review a student's academic and/or professional performance. The Director of the School and at least two other tenured faculty constitute the permanent membership of the PPC. In those instances

where the student's performance review is in regards to performance in the field practicum, the MSW practicum director and, if appropriate, the field liaison and field instructor will be invited to meet with the PPC. In this context, the field representatives may be asked to participate in the decision-making process.

An academic and/or professional performance review process may be initiated 1) when a student's grade point average (GPA) falls below a 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or 2) when a faculty advisor, other faculty member or practicum supervisor raises special concerns about a student's academic or professional performance. The Graduate School guidelines, which may be found in the Bulletin, state that a student must be placed on probation "if the transcript GPA, based on a minimum of three courses (9 credit hours), falls below 3.0" or if the program "regards the student's progress as unsatisfactory." If this happens, "a student will be placed on probation for one semester, during which time progress will be formally reviewed by the program. After one semester, a student will be removed from probation, continued on probation, or dismissed. A student may not continue on probation for more than one calendar year," (UM-St. Louis Bulletin) and in most cases will be dismissed from the program if their GPA has not reached 3.0 after two semesters on probation. Students will also be dismissed if they receive 2 F's, which is considered not making satisfactory progress in the program. A grade lower than a "C-" is recorded as an "F". The Graduate School and/or the School of Social Work will notify students placed on probation and their advisors.

When there are questions about a student's ability to perform professionally as an MSW social worker, the student will be notified and asked to meet with his or her advisor and, if appropriate, the MSW program practicum director. If the problem is not resolved, the student may also be asked to meet with the PPC. In most cases a plan to remedy the problem will be developed and shared with the student, who will be allowed to respond to the plan. An exception would be an egregious violation of professional behavior as defined by the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics. When applying for admission, students sign this form indicating agreement to follow the Code of Ethics. The remediation plan generally will include a suggestion that the student seek help for those problems that affect the student's ability to engage in professional social work behavior. If appropriate, the student may be asked to repeat practicum hours that were not successfully completed. If, after review by the PPC, the student has been unwilling or unable to complete the agreed upon plan, the student may be dismissed from the program.

Student Rights

The University of Missouri provides equal opportunity for all enrolled students and applicants for admission to the University on the basis of merit without discrimination on the basis of their race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age or disability, or Vietnam era veteran status. Sexual harassment shall be considered discrimination because of sex. To insure compliance with this policy, all University of Missouri prospective or enrolled students shall have available to them a student discrimination grievance procedure for resolving complaints and/or grievances regarding alleged discrimination. These procedures may be found in Section 390.010 of the CCR and in the Appendix of the University of Missouri - St. Louis Bulletin.

To begin a grade grievance, you must first discuss your grade with your professor. If you are unable to resolve the problem, you should next speak to the director of the program or that person's designee. For other grievances, the Student Affairs Office, the Graduate Dean or the Equal Opportunity or Affirmative Action Officer will be able to provide information about where to obtain information about procedures for initiating a complaint.

HELPFUL URLs

University

Graduate School: <http://www.umsi.edu/divisions/graduate/>
314-516-5900, 425 Woods Hall

UM- St. Louis Bulletin: <http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin>

University Health Services: <http://www.umsi.edu/services/health>
314-516-5671, 131 MSC

Counseling Services: <http://www.umsi.edu/services/counser>
314-516-5711, 126 MSC

Student Code of Conduct, Disciplinary Matters, Financial Aid Appeals, Grade Appeals, Initiating Grievances:

<http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin/student-conduct.html>

Equal Opportunity Policies of UM-St. Louis: <http://www.umsi.edu/bulletin/student-conduct.html> (at end of student conduct section)

Collected Rules and Regulations (CRR): <http://www.umsystem.edu/ums/departments/gc/rules/>

Non-profit Management & Leadership Program: <http://www.umsi.edu/~conted/npml/>
314-516-6713, 911 Tower

Student Financial Aid: <http://www.umsi.edu/services/finaid/>
314-516-5526, 327 MSC

Social Work

National Association of Social Workers: www.naswdc.org

National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics:
www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/default.asp

Council on Social Work Education: www.cswe.org