



Department of Social Work and Human Services MSW PROGRAM

Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior in Field Education

Please carefully read the policies below. The Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior apply to all students enrolled in field placements (SW 7708; SW 7709; SW 8712; SW 8713) in the MSW Program at Kennesaw State University.

Due to the nature of professional social work practice, the MSW Program has different expectations of students than do non-professional programs. The standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective social work professionals and are provided so that students and faculty can be clear about expectations and procedures to address performance concerns in field education. The ultimate goal of the Standards is to help students have a successful experience as a MSW student intern in field settings.

All social work students will be provided with and expected to read the Standards for Professional and Ethical Behaviors and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. Students will then be asked to sign an acknowledgment that they have read, are aware of the contents of, and will abide by the documents. The form will be kept in students' field files.

The MSW Program Field Education has the following Standards of Professional and Ethical Behavior:

1. ***Appropriate attire*** – dressing in casual/business attire appropriate to the agency's protocol
2. ***Attendance and punctuality*** – establishing and maintaining a regular schedule; maintaining a current time sheet of placement hours; arriving before the appointed time; being prepared to engage as a working professional; providing prompt notification of tardiness or absences
3. ***Respectful demeanor and interactions*** – demonstrating respect and deference to staff/clients/peers; conducting oneself in a manner consistent with the values and ethics of NASW and the profession
4. ***Professional language and communications*** – demonstrating professional oral and written (including electronic) communication skills; using discretion and appropriate professional language in addressing clients/staff/peers; “filtering” language to limit emotional reactivity/content; being very selective in communicating with colleagues outside of regular work hours (e.g. weekends, evenings)
5. ***Appropriate effort and initiative*** – collaborating with one's supervisor to identify and complete a weekly work plan/set of work tasks; completing higher priority tasks before secondary tasks; following through on appointed tasks and activities; spending placement hours in professionally useful activity; showing a genuine interest, initiative and engagement in the daily life of the organization; demonstrating intellectual and professional curiosity and insightfulness



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6. **Accountability and integrity** – being accountable to the agency’s practice guidelines and expectations; completing tasks and activities in a professional, high quality and timely manner; speaking and acting on behalf of the agency only as authorized by one’s role and responsibilities; maintaining professional integrity and honesty in all activities/interactions; representing accurately the placement hours worked and tasks completed.
7. **Ethical Obligations** – maintaining client/agency confidentiality standards, especially when using cell phones/electronic devices; upholding NASW ethical standards and seeking appropriate consultation when in doubt; maintaining strict personal-professional boundaries in the real and virtual work environment, especially in relation to social media (e.g. Facebook); restricting the use of electronic devices to professional purposes only while in the placement setting; Appreciation of the value of diversity. Effective and nonjudgmental relation to and work with others who are different from oneself. Appropriate service to all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person’s age, class, race, religious beliefs, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and/or value system. No imposition of personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on clients. Demonstration of clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. Does not sexually harass others; make verbal or physical threats; become involved in sexual relationships with clients, supervisors, or faculty; abuse others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participate in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.
8. **Interpersonal Skills** – demonstrates the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession. These include compassion, empathy, altruism, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. Takes appropriate responsibility for own actions and considers the impact of these actions on others.
9. **Emotional self-regulation** – attending to one’s emotional reactivity and triggers; taking responsibility for one’s feelings/behavior and avoiding blame; avoiding the expression of raw emotions; being personally and professionally centered when engaging with clients/staff; using appropriate professional language (spoken and written) to filter emotional content; demonstrating a willingness to resolve difficult relationships and modify one’s behavior accordingly; not expecting special consideration or ‘entitlement’. Uses sound judgment. Seeks and effectively uses help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance. Engages in counseling or seeks out support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties do any of the following:
 - compromise scholastic and other performance in field placement,
 - interfere with professional judgment and behavior, or
 - jeopardize the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the current NASW Codes of Ethics)



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10. ***Self-Awareness*** – exhibits knowledge of how one’s values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships. Accurately assesses one’s own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Shows awareness of self and how one is perceived by others. Reflects on one’s own limitations as they relate to professional capacities. Is willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes in working with clients and other professionals.
11. ***Responsiveness to feedback*** – demonstrating non-defensive receptivity to feedback and suggestion; showing a willingness to be self-reflective and self-corrective.
12. ***Appropriateness of delivery of services*** – it is unacceptable to provide services and/or interventions in exchange for direct compensation; Being grossly negligent in the practice as a social worker intern; Providing counseling to friends or family members; Misrepresenting self as other than a social work student in field practicum.
13. ***Impairment*** – will not use alcohol or drugs in ways that impair their ability to perform the work of the profession, or that results in compromised client care.
14. ***Criminal activity*** – participation in dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation of self, agency, or the University. It is unacceptable to engage in behaviors that result in the conviction for a felony offense while in the MSW program.

“By signing this document, I am stating my willingness to follow these policies, as well as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, and any additional policies set forth by the Department of Social Work and Human Services at Kennesaw State University as an MSW student intern in a field internship placement.

Student Name (print): _____

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____