

MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK
Academic Year 2013-2014

Dear MSW Students in the School of Social Work:

The faculty and staff of the School of Social Work welcome you to the School. We are delighted that you will be joining us and we hope that the time you spend with us will be productive and enriching. We know that you come to us with unique strengths and life experiences, and we hope to help you build on these qualities in order to be the best social workers you can be.

The School of Social Work offers degrees at both the Bachelor (BSW) and Master (MSW) levels. Both programs are fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation. This assures you that your degree is recognized as meeting the Council's stringent national standards for social work education. We are extremely proud of our faculty, their professional expertise, outstanding scholarship and the quality of their teaching. We are also proud of the record of achievement that our graduates have compiled over the years. Graduates of the School are found in every type of social service agency in Massachusetts and are continuing to assume positions of great responsibility.

Our hope is to provide each of you with the knowledge, skills, values, and practice experience that will enable you to move competently into social work positions upon your graduation. ***You*** are the reason we are here. We want to support you and your personal growth as you undertake the rigorous challenges of social work education.

The purpose of this Student Handbook is to describe the MSW Program as well as the Program's procedures and policies. The Handbook is designed to assist you in negotiating the various resources available through the School and University as well as to spell out various expectations that the MSW Program has for your educational progress.

We hope that you will find us readily available to address your questions and concerns as well as appreciate your achievements and successes.

Again, our warmest welcome.

Sincerely,
Faculty and Staff
School of Social Work

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Additional materials available on the webpage www.salemstate.edu/MSW:

- I. Professional Standards Social Work Education
- II. MSW Educational Plans of Study
- III. N.A.S.W. Code of Ethics
- IV. C.S.W.E. Commission on Accreditation Statement on Education Policy
- V. APA Style Guidelines and Statement on Plagiarism

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Academic Year 2013-2014

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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Social work education at Salem State University started as an undergraduate major in 1969. William Vaughn and Dr. Edna McGlynn from the University's Social Sciences Department were instrumental in creating the social work major. In July 1975, the University established the Social Work Department under the leadership of Chairperson Patricia Roderick. In November 1979, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the accrediting body for all social work programs in the United States, accredited Salem State University Social Work Department, retroactive to 1977. In May 1980, the University's Board of Trustees, voted to permit the Social Work Department to award the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree.

Following the accreditation of the BSW Program, the University became actively involved in creating a Masters of Social Work (MSW) Program and, in September of 1986, the *School of Social Work* at Salem State University was established. The School admitted its first class of MSW students in 1987 and graduated its first class of 20 MSW students in 1989. The MSW Program was given initial accreditation status by CSWE in 1991, retroactive to graduating class of 1989. The MSW Program at Salem State was the first CSWE-accredited MSW degree program in the Massachusetts public higher education system and the first program in the state with an advanced generalist perspective.

The BSW and MSW programs remain fully accredited by CSWE.

SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK: MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the School of Social Work is the education of social work professionals who will contribute to social, economic, and human well-being through culturally competent practice and advocacy in local, national, and international communities. The School's mission encompasses curricula, programming, field education practica, scholarship, and organizational linkages especially designed to sustain meaningful connections between social work education and public sector practice. Through all of its activities, the School strives to create interactive and collegial learning environments that support and promote diversity, knowledge development, professional identities, and a commitment to social work values and ethics.

MSW PROGRAM MISSION STATEMENT

The Salem State University Master of Social Work (MSW) Program prepares social workers for professional practice and leadership grounded in social work values, ethics, history, knowledge and skills for public and publicly-supported services. MSW students and faculty are engaged as partners in knowledge development, community-based research, and advocacy efforts that sustain diversity, social and economic justice, global interconnections and the building of healthy sustainable communities through service and civic engagement.

MSW PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals of the MSW Program

The following goals derive from the mission of the Salem State University School of Social Work MSW Program and reflect the purposes of social work education as defined by the Council on Social Work Education Educational Policies and Standards (2003):

1. Provide high-quality education for advanced professional social work practice in accordance with the knowledge base, skills, values, ethics, and history of the social work profession.

2. Provide high-quality education for advanced professional social work practice that is informed by a multi-systemic, ecological framework and applied to public, publicly-supported, and community-based services.
3. Create learning and teaching environments that support collegiality, collaboration, and leadership development of advanced professional social workers.
4. Promote social and economic justice through culturally competent practice, advocacy, and the empowerment of oppressed and vulnerable populations.
5. Promote professional social work practice that incorporates human diversity, inclusiveness, and global perspectives.
6. Produce and collaborate in research, scholarship, and service activities that advance civic engagement, organizational development, and sustainable communities.

MSW Program Objectives

A.	Practice in accordance with the social work profession's values, ethical standards, and principles.
B.	Understand and interpret the history of the social work profession and its influence on contemporary public and publicly-supported services, civic engagement, and sustainable communities.
C.	Practice without discrimination and with respect for as well as knowledge of the meanings related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
D.	Communicate and engage effectively and differentially with diverse client populations, colleagues, and communities.
E.	Engage competently in advanced generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities specific to one of the following selected concentration areas: family and child services; health and mental health services; older adult services and end-of-life care.
F.	Use and critique an ecological framework and its encompassing conceptual models to understand individual development and behavior across the life span as well as interactions among and within individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities..
G.	Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
H.	Advance social and economic justice through an understanding of the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination.
I.	Advance social and economic justice through the application of advocacy strategies and an understanding of the dynamics of social and organizational change.
J.	Evaluate one's own practice interventions from an ecological perspective that

	reflects an understanding of the transactional relationships among individual, familial, group, community, and organizational systems.
K.	Seek out and use supervision and consultation appropriate to competent social work practice and continuing professional development.
L.	Collaborate effectively and demonstrate leadership skills within organizations and service delivery systems that are public, publicly-supported, and community-based.
M.	Apply research findings to practice and identify practice areas in need of research and evidence.
N.	Evaluate research studies and, in collaboration with colleagues, conduct independent research that is relevant to the resolution of social problems.
O.	Formulate, analyze, and influence social welfare policies from perspectives that are grounded in an understanding of human rights and the global interconnections of oppression.

MSW DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

All candidates for the MSW degree complete a minimum of sixty two (62) semester hours (adjusting for transfer and advanced standing credit) with a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 grading scale. Thirty (30) semester hours represent the professional *foundation curriculum*; the other thirty-two (32) semester hours represent the required *concentration curriculum* plus electives. Field Education is included in and considered an integral aspect of the foundation and concentration curricula.

Students enrolled in the Program's **Advanced Standing Study Plan** complete the Program on either a full-time or extended-time basis. In either case, coursework begins during the summer – **the Advanced Standing Study Plan is the only study plan in which coursework begins during the summer**. Full-time Advanced Standing students also begin Field Education during the first summer and continue with the same Field Education practicum during the following (and final) academic year. Extended-time Advanced Standing students begin Field Education during the second summer and continue with the same Field Education practicum during the following (and final) academic year. The adjusted degree requirements for Advanced Standing Program totals forty-four (44) semester hours.

MSW FOUNDATION CURRICULUM

The foundation curriculum is designed in accordance with a generalist perspective of social work practice. In keeping with a generalist practice perspective, the curriculum is grounded in an ecological systems framework that recognizes the centrality of the person and environment configuration and emphasizes the relationships within and among client systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. The overarching conceptual framework in the MSW curricula is an ecological framework that allows for the integration of the full range of social work content areas: Values and Ethics; Diversity; Populations-At-Risk and Social and Economic Justice; Human Behavior and the Social Environment; Social Welfare Policy and Services; Social Work Practice; Research; and Field Education.

The ecological framework is especially relevant to advanced generalist social work practice in its emphasis on approaches that are systemic, integrative and multi-method to understand and analyze the contextual development and behavior across systems levels. The ecological framework informs our belief that multiple points of intervention promote the social, psychological, and economic well-being of individuals and the systems in which they live. The MSW Program is embedded within an ecological framework and culminates in advanced generalist practice. The foundation curriculum lays the foundation for the concentration curriculum and for advanced generalist practice.

MSW CONCENTRATION CURRICULUM

The MSW Program's concentration curriculum is designed in accordance with an advanced generalist perspective. In keeping with an advanced generalist practice perspective, the curriculum builds on the foundation year content by providing and expecting increased breadth, depth, and integration of knowledge, skills, and values. In addition, the Program's concentration curriculum involves the students' selection of one of the following concentration areas: Child and Family Services; Health/Mental Health; or Older Adult Services/End-of-Life Care.

The concentration curriculum distinguishes itself from the foundation curriculum through courses and field education practica that address more specific as well as more complex person and environment configurations. Such complex person and environment configurations involve higher levels of risk, ambiguity, and specificity than those addressed in the foundation curriculum. Simultaneously, the curriculum supports the advanced generalist practitioner's need for sophisticated technical abilities and the assumption of practice roles that demand increased responsibility as well as risk. Within this practice context, complicated ethical and social policy dilemmas are addressed.

Where generalist practitioners have competence to provide services within a range of agency and community settings, advanced generalist practitioners must be prepared to perform at higher levels of mastery and independence within specific concentration areas. The curriculum also addresses the expectation that our students, in particular, should be prepared to perform as change agents with concentration-specific knowledge of social welfare policies and programs as well as complex public sector and social service delivery systems.

The concentration curriculum is designed to advance the practitioner's ability to develop and critique theory; to use and engage in research; and to analyze and implement social policies across system levels within an area of concentration. The concentration curriculum also stresses that each of these capacities must reflect an advanced and integrated understanding of social work values and ethics; diversity; the promotion of social and economic justice; and the needs of populations-at-risk.

AREAS OF CONCENTRATION

Introduction: Advanced Concentration Curriculum

The MSW Program Concentration curriculum is organized according to three specialized areas of concentration: Students choose from Child and Family Services, Health/Mental Health Services, or Older Adult Services/End-of-Life Care. All three of the concentration areas of specialization are grounded in the ecological framework that prepares students to work across system levels with diverse populations. The concentration curriculum distinguishes itself from the foundation curriculum through courses and field education practicum that address more specific as well as more complex person-in-environment

configurations. Such complex person–in–environment configurations involve higher levels of risk, ambiguity, and conflict than those addressed in the foundation curriculum. In keeping with advanced curricula, the curriculum builds on the foundation curriculum content by providing and expecting increased breadth, depth, specificity and integration of knowledge, skills, and values (EP 5).

The MSW program conceptualizes the development of specialized skills as concurrent with policy, theory, research and field education specific to one of the three concentration areas. Concentration level practice courses encompass both direct and organizational level practice. In their concentration level practice courses, MSW students master practice principles which apply across concentrations. Our practice courses ensure that advanced generalist practitioners are prepared to be involved with multiple-systems and multiple dimensions of practice, and to handle the increased levels of ambiguity, conflict and risk that occur in specialized roles with high levels of responsibility.

Child and Family Services: Conceptual Framework

Social services to children and families constitute a large proportion of all services provided by social workers and are an especially important component of public and publicly-affiliated social services. In keeping with the ecological framework, the Child and Family Services concentration prepares social workers with advanced knowledge and skills in child and family welfare, research, and the application of knowledge and practice to systems of care at all levels. This includes specific knowledge and skills related to biological, psychological, relational, cultural, economic and social dynamics that influence child and family development. An integral aspect of the concentration is the study of behaviors that place children and families at risk of harm and/or dissolution and lays a foundation for understanding appropriate social work practice methods. This concentration emphasizes theories, concepts, models, and research pertinent to child development and family process and functioning that are based on fostering resilience, building strengths, and empowerment towards problem resolution.

Health/Mental Health Services: Conceptual Framework

Drawing from an ecological framework, the Health/Mental Health curriculum enables students to integrate knowledge, skills, values, and technologies that build upon and support the goals of promoting social, political, economic, emotional, psychological, and physical well-being of all people, regardless of place of residence or birth, health insurance status, or demographic characteristics. This framework emphasizes impacts of personal factors, social situations, environments, and culture on individuals, families, groups, and communities. Strengths-based and wellness perspectives, as well as commitment to lifelong development and social change, competency and community building guide the Health/Mental Health Services curriculum. Interventions examined within the concentration include prevention at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Also of importance are evidence-based research methods that are grounded in a commitment to core social work values and ethical decision making.

Older Adult Services/End-of-Life Care: Conceptual Framework

This concentration prepares students for advanced practice and leadership roles in public sector programs serving the elderly and persons involved in end-of-life care. Toward this aim, the concentration integrates policies, programs and intervention strategies for gerontological social work and end-of-life care across systems. Designed to build upon the mission, goals, and objectives of the MSW program, this concentration area utilizes the ecological framework with an emphasis on the life course and policies specific to life course perspective. A major focus is the application of knowledge and skills related to diversity and inclusiveness in social work practice for growth and development in old age and during illness and death regardless of the individual or family's position in the life cycle. The concentration builds

knowledge and skills in the formulation, analysis, and critique of prevention strategies designed to provide social work services that prepare client populations for late life, death, and terminal illness.

MSW STUDY PLANS

The MSW Program offers three general plans of study, one full-time (two-year) and two extended-time (three-year and four-year). Courses for all three plans begin in September. Please note that regardless of study plan, all required foundation courses must be completed before beginning any concentration course. *Please also note that students are required to complete three electives in the general plans of study.*

Two Year Plan of Study

In this study plan, foundation field education consists of 16 hours per week and concentration field education consists of 20 hours per week. In other words, the first academic year students will be assigned to a field education practicum site two days a week – typically when students are not in class. During the second academic year, field education at the site involves 20 hours per week or typically 2 ½ days each week. Students need to plan for scheduling of three electives.

Three-Year Plan of Study

The Three-Year Study Plan is a unique plan: students enter in September and complete degree requirements in three years – three years that include **two full summers of field education** (sometimes known as “block placements”).

Field education in the Foundation Curriculum Summer consists of 32 hours per week; field education in the Concentration Curriculum Summer consists of 40 hours per week. In this plan, practice courses must be taken during the academic year immediately preceding Field Education.

Please note that students enrolled in the Three-Year Plan complete degree requirements in August. Students with a maximum of eight credits outstanding are allowed to “walk” at the May commencement before the completion of all degree requirements. See page 33 for further information. Students need to plan for scheduling of three electives.

Four-Year Plan of Study

Students enter in September and complete degree requirements in four academic years with field education occurring concurrently with social work practice courses during the second and fourth academic years. In this study plan, foundation field education consists of 16 hours per week and concentration field education consists of 20 hours per week. In other words, the second academic year students will be assigned to a field education practicum site two days a week – typically when students are not in class. During the fourth academic year, field education at the site involves 20 hours per week or typically 2 ½ days each week. Students need to plan for scheduling of three electives.

Advanced Standing Full Time Plan of Study (One Summer plus One Academic Year)

Students must hold a BSW degree from a social work school or undergraduate program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and be accepted into the Advanced Standing Study Plan.

Full-time advanced standing students enter in mid-May and complete degree requirements for commencement the following May.

In the Full-Time Advanced Standing Study Plan, students begin field education at 16 hours per week during the first summer of enrollment and continue at the same field education practicum at 20 hours per week throughout the academic year (September –May). *Please also note that students are required to complete two electives in the advanced standing plans of study.*

Advanced Standing Extended Time Study Plan (Two Summers, Two Academic Years)

Students must hold a BSW degree from a social work school or undergraduate program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and be accepted into the Advanced Standing Study Plan. Extended Time advanced standing students enter in mid-May and complete degree requirements for commencement two years later.

Please also note that students in the Extended Time Advanced Standing Study Plan begin field education at 16 hours per week during the second summer of enrollment and continue at the same field education practicum at 20 hours per week through the end of the following (and final) academic year. *Please also note that students are required to complete two electives in the advanced standing plans of study.*

MSW FIELD EDUCATION

Advanced professional social work practice entails the ability to translate knowledge, values, and skills learning into practice. Field Education is an integral portion of the total learning process in that it provides the arena for applying and demonstrating social work values, ethics, and knowledge in the practice site, with diverse clients and in the multi-modal, multi-systems levels required by the generalist approach to social work practice. In keeping with the MSW Program's mission, at least one of two required field education practica must be in a public or publicly contracted agency.

The goal of Field Education is to operationalize, through sequential learning objectives, the student's ability to engage in advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups and communities. The philosophy of the Field Education Sequence is to promote agency and community-based learning in an advanced generalist frame. This means developing and challenging assessment and intervention competencies at all system levels.

With regard to Field Education, it might be helpful to know what the following terms mean:

A Faculty Field Liaison is a member of the full-time faculty or an adjunct specifically hired to serve as a liaison between the MSW Program and the agency or organization in which you are completing your field education practicum. The Faculty Field Liaison is to serve as a resource to both you as a student and to your Field Instructor. The Faculty Field Liaison organizes and conducts the monthly Field Education Seminars that are part of your Field Education course. The Faculty Field Liaison assigns your grade for Field Education based on the Field Instructor's evaluation of your performance, his/her own evaluation of your performance, and your self-evaluations.

In some cases, your Faculty Field Liaison may also be your Academic Advisor (see section on “Advising”) but it is important to know that the two roles are quite distinct. If a student believes that their educational experience would be enhanced by having two separate individuals in these roles, the student should contact the MSW Program Coordinator to request a change of Academic Advisor – a change in Faculty Field Liaison is not an option.

A Field Education Practicum or Placement denotes the site of field education hours. Practicum or field placement sites have been evaluated by the MSW Program to determine their suitability for MSW Field Education. Students should not assume that an agency or organization in which they work automatically qualifies as a practicum or placement site. This fact is important to keep this in mind when considering an “employed placement” – see the MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide for additional information on “employed placements.”

A Field Instructor is someone employed at the practicum site who holds an MSW degree and several years of direct practice experience. The Field Instructor is sometimes referred to in agencies as a “supervisor.” However, the School encourages the use of the term Field Instructor instead of supervisor in order to distinguish them from individuals at the field education practicum who may be employed as the student’s employment supervisor.

To achieve the overall goal of integrating classroom learning with field practice, a focused team effort is required on the part of school faculty, agency field instructors, and students. Orientation to the expectations of the field learning experience includes a variety of formal and informal learning mechanisms such as orientation workshops, seminars, and field liaison visits. Active attempts are made to ensure coordination and congruence of classroom and field “learning opportunities.” Faculty Field Liaisons conduct monthly seminars with students enrolled in Field Education. Faculty Field Liaisons are full time MSW faculty members or adjunct graduate faculty with significant practice experience.

Four Field Education semester courses are required of all students. While Field Education is divided into semesters with distinct course numbers, Field Education is considered year-long or summer-long (depending on study plan) course. If, for any reason, a student is unable to complete the second semester of a Field Education Practica, both semesters must be repeated. During the Foundation Curriculum, Field Education Practica are either two days per week (16 hours) during the academic year or four days per week (32 hours) during the summer block Field Education Practica (Three-Year Plan). During the Concentration Curriculum, Field Education Practica are either three days per week (20 hours) during the academic year or five days per week (40 hours) during the summer block Field Education Practica (Three-Year Plan). Students must be placed in two different field education practica sites, one for Foundation Curriculum and one for Concentration Curriculum.

For Advanced Standing students, full-time students begin Field Practica in Summer Sessions I and II (16 hours weekly) and continue in the same placement through the Academic Year as Concentration Year Students (20 hours); for extended-time Advanced Standing students, this sequence begins in the second summer and continues into the second Academic Year.

The first semester of each Field Education practicum in the foundation curricula emphasizes micro level activities between individuals, families and small groups as well as micro level activity of intake, assessment, case management and problem-solving approaches. The second semester integrates macro systems level activities that deal with client service systems and agency-to-agency system linkages to community service networks. Adjustments to the curriculum assignments are made for students who are placed in macro roles in agencies.

During concentration level Field Education, students are placed in concentration-specific field education practica. Building on the Foundation Curriculum, Concentration Curriculum Field Education provides an

opportunity to integrate new learning from concentration-specific courses with the continued evaluation of the student's development as a professionally self-aware, knowledgeable, and skillful practitioner.

Placement procedures: Planning for placement of students for field placement begins in the spring semester proceeding the placement period. For all students, field education practica take place in agencies and institutions that must be approved by the Field Education Office prior to any placement process.

The Field Education Office holds specific policies and procedures for placing all students. All students planning on enrolling in a field education practicum must complete an *Application for Field Education Placement*. The information provided by the student on the *Application for Field Education Placement* (e.g., educational and experiential background, special circumstances and location, current professional resume) is partially the basis for matching a student with a specific field education practicum. Additional information regarding selection of field education practicum placements is contained in the MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide.

The student's submission of *Applications for Field Education Placement* that must be received by designated deadlines. For students entering the MSW Program's full-time general study plan, the Field Education Office must receive applications by June 15th for practicum beginning in the following September. Continuing students and students entering the Advanced Standing study plans should plan to submit their applications for field education placement prior to February 1st of the year they plan to complete their field education practica.

The following are the School's major considerations in planning for the MSW Program field education practica:

- 1) Practica that meet MSW Program objectives;
- 2) accommodation of needs of students who have formally recognized disabilities (e.g. sensory or mobility challenges);
- 3) special planning for students who wish to complete one employed field experience in the place where they work and who request this well within deadlines noted above and fully complete application for employed placement (see details in MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide);
- 4) student career goals and preferences;
- 5) expectations of performance or time commitment by the field education practicum site (e.g., some agencies require 24 hours a week for concentration level placements and many school settings require a commitment through the end of the school-based practicum year).

Please note that summer block placements are available in the Three-Year Study Plan only. Students in this plan begin placement in early May and complete in late August. The practicum is completed during usual daytime office hours with the possibility of occasional attendance at other times if pre-approved and on-site supervision is provided. Summer block foundation placements are 32 hours a week and concentration level placements are 40 hours per week.

The following are important Field Education pre-requisites

Criminal Record Check

The *Application for Field Placement* requests that a student reveal to the Field Education Office any criminal record history. This information is shared with the agency only when necessary and students are encouraged to take charge of this informing process. There are many social service agencies that do a criminal offense record information check of all paid or volunteer employees or students. This is intended to assure an appropriate and fully informed student-agency match and is also intended to protect the students as well as clients and field agency. If an agency does not complete the CORI independently, the

student can request a CORI application through the Field Education Office, which will process the CORI request through the Dean's Office, School of Human Services. The School will facilitate obtaining a CORI history at no expense to the student; the report will be returned to the student who can then provide it to the agency. See procedure in the MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide.

Medical Clearance

Some agencies require medical clearance or other pre-placement requirements prior to beginning field placement. The student should inquire/be informed of these expectations at the time of the pre-placement interview and complete all requirements in time to begin field education as scheduled.

Student Responsibility to Obtain Professional Liability Insurance

All students entering Field Education Practicum must obtain professional liability (malpractice) insurance. This insurance may be obtained at a reasonable cost through the NASW Assurance Services, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) agent.

Application forms for both NASW membership and the insurance may be obtained in the School's Field Office or NASW national website: www.naswdc.org. Prior to the first week of the initial field semester, students must show proof of their liability insurance coverage before entering the field placement. Some agencies provide professional liability for interns; the field education office can identify these agencies. Liability coverage must provide \$1 million/3 million aggregate coverage.

Further details on the field educational program requirements are covered in the MSW Field Education Curriculum Guide.

MSW REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE COURSES

All of the required and elective courses are listed in the School of Graduate Studies Catalogue. The Catalogue can be accessed at <http://catalog.salemstate.edu>

The required courses and electives are three (3) credit courses. **Please note that not all electives are offered each year and that "Concentration Curriculum Selected Topics" vary from year to year.** Prerequisites for electives may be waived under the following conditions: space available in the class (students meeting the prerequisites carry "seniority"); the individual course instructor's permission; and the MSW Program Coordinator's permission.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES REGARDING MSW ELECTIVE OPTIONS

Students in the Two-, Three- and Four-Year Plans of Study are required to take three (3) electives; students in the Advanced Standing Study Plans are required to take two (2) electives.

Normally, students take electives at the School of Social Work. However, on occasion, students prefer to take an elective outside of the School or University. Only one of the following options may be used to fulfill one required elective.

Elective Options:

1. Students can take one graduate level course at another educational institution

2. Students can take a graduate course in another program at Salem State University:
3. Students can propose a Directed Study

Option One – A graduate level course taken at another educational institution

Maximum of three credit hours may be applied toward requirements for the MSW degree from Salem State University regardless of higher number of credit hours granted by the other institution.

Students are required to contact the MSW Program Coordinator prior to taking a course at another educational institution. Students need approval to enroll in a graduate level course taken at another educational institution and must complete the Permission to Take Course At Another Institution Form available online at salemstate.edu/academics, click on the School of Graduate Studies and then click on Forms on the menu on the left. Required documentation includes the course syllabi, course description form the catalogue, and an official transcript. Please note that a minimum grade of “B” is required for transfer credits.

Option Two - Students can take a graduate course in another program at Salem State University:

One graduate level elective course may be taken at another department or program within Salem State University. A maximum of three credit hours for the course will be applied towards requirements for the MSW degree.

Students are required to contact the MSW Program Coordinator prior to taking a course outside of the MSW Program. Once approved, students need to complete a Course Substitution form available online at salemstate.edu/academics, click on the School of Graduate Studies and then click on Forms on the menu on the left. Please note that a minimum grade of “B” is required for transfer credits.

Option Three - Directed Study

Purpose of a Directed Study Course

One graduate elective may be proposed as a Directed Study. The purpose of Directed Study is to offer graduate students the opportunity to study an aspect of social work that is of special interest to them and is not covered adequately in an existing elective or required course. The directed study area must be relevant to social work. The final product of a Directed Study course may include a paper, a grant proposal, a conference presentation or some other creative alternative (e.g., video project, training curriculum, etc.). **Students may not take required courses as Directed Study.**

Eligibility

MSW students are eligible to pursue a Directed Study Course during their concentration curriculum; i.e., students must have completed all of their foundation curriculum courses prior to enrolling in a Directed Study Course. A Directed Study Course is elective in nature, must conform to School policy regarding elective courses, is limited to three credits, and must be completed during a one-semester period of time. Students may participate in only one Directed Study Course during their MSW studies.

Procedures

A “Directed Study Proposal” must be developed in consultation with a full time faculty member. The Proposal should be limited to three pages and include the following:

- The title of the directed study
- The name of the faculty member with whom the student would like to work*

- A description of the area to be investigated and its relevance to social work
- A brief statement regarding the relationship between the directed study and the student's overall educational goals
- A description of the nature and frequency of student/faculty contacts
- A description of the anticipated course product
- A description of the proposed method for evaluating student performance.

The proposal itself must be signed and dated by the student, the faculty member who will be teaching the Directed Study, and the student's Academic Advisor.

The Directed Study Proposal Form is available online at salemstate.edu/academics, click on the School of Graduate Studies and then click on Forms on the menu on the left. Required documentation includes the course syllabi, course description form from the catalogue, and an official transcript.

Proposals are submitted to the MSW Program Coordinator and must be received at least six weeks prior to course registration. A proposal approved by the MSW Program Coordinator is attached to the University's Directed Study form that must be signed by the student, the faculty member, the MSW Program Coordinator, the Department Chairperson, and the Dean of the Graduate Schools prior to the student registering for the course. The student is responsible to obtain MSW Program Coordinator and then Graduate Dean's signed approvals prior to registering. Once approved by all parties, the faculty member will be formally appointed to serve as course instructor. **Please note a Directed Study does not qualify for 50% tuition reimbursement for state employees.**

*Full-time and adjunct faculty may teach Directed Study courses but it is the student's responsibility to confirm faculty availability for any given semester. Faculty on sabbatical are not eligible to supervise a Directed Study.

Remember: A maximum of 3 graduate level credits may be taken under Options One, Two or Three.

MSW ACADEMIC ADVISING

The formal advisement process begins for MSW students enrolled in the General Study plans and advanced standing at the Program's orientation and advising Day in May of each year. Incoming students are informed of their advisor in the Fall and are encouraged to initiate a meeting with them early on in the semester. Until students are able to meet with their individual advisors, the MSW Program Coordinator acts as the advisor for all incoming students. This insures direct access to a faculty member for advisement from the first day of entrance into the program. Furthermore, the MSW Program Coordinator presides over the orientation and registration process.

Academic advisors are able to help students with matters regarding the MSW Program in general including course work, Field Education, and concentration specific questions. The Student Handbook offers a range of information regarding the MSW program, the curriculum, the concentrations, policies and procedures, but cannot cover all concerns for students. The academic advisor is the individual to help students problem-solve and make various decisions for themselves while in the program. Students concerns can be wide and varied and can range from changing study plan from full-time to extended-time (or vice versa), to changing concentrations or taking leaves of absence from the Program. For these and similar concerns, the academic advisor is the first point of contact.

Academic advisors are members of the MSW Program's full-time faculty and are required to post and to be available for students for five conference hours per week throughout the academic year. MSW students in the foundation curriculum may, or may not, have an advisor from their specific choice of concentration. However, during the concentration curriculum, students are assigned a faculty member as

advisor from their particular concentration. This allows for students to develop a relationship with a faculty member who is knowledgeable about their chosen concentration and who may assist with developing career goals and practice competence through field education and job searches.

Advisors are kept apprised of student progress by receiving copies of advisees' transcripts each semester. This helps to ensure that faculty advisors are aware of potential academic difficulties. It is strongly recommended that students' meet regularly with their advisors since any special requests, problem, or academic difficulties that a student may confront while in the program are usually first discussed with the advisor. **Students are required to meet with their Academic Advisor in order to receive their pre-registration materials for upcoming semesters and obtain the advisor's signature on pre-registration form. Academic advisors must also approve students' requests for Directed Study or requests to take an out-of-department elective prior to receiving MSW Program Coordinator approval. This meeting is also designed as an opportunity to review the student's progress in the Program.**

Academic advisors in the MSW program are expected to:

1. Be knowledgeable about the materials contained in the University catalogues and the School's Student Handbook related to the academic and non-academic requirements of the program;
2. Be available to students during hours that are publicly posted for at least 75 hours per semester;
3. Provide assistance in assessing the student's aptitude and motivation for a career in social work;
4. Assist advisees in their course selection for pre-registration and sign-off on pre-registration forms;
5. Assist advisees in periodically evaluating their total educational performance and experience;
6. Discuss with students their difficulties maintaining academic and non-academic standards, especially in connection with receipt of a Flagging Form (see Grading Guidelines and the School's *Professional Standards for Social Work Education*, included in this Handbook);
7. Provide support and make referrals for additional services and resources when appropriate;
8. Refer to the Student Progression Committee any student who has failed to meet the school's academic or professional standards and requirements (see section of Handbook on *Professional Standards for Social Work Education*);
9. Refer to the Student Progression Committee any student who evidences lack of aptitude or readiness to continue in professional social work education, or who evidences of lack of readiness for field education;
10. Refer to the MSW Program Coordinator any student who is unusually well prepared for graduate studies and who is requesting a modification in their academic plan;
11. Advise students requesting a modification in their study plan including, but not limited to, changes from full-time to extended-time status, changes in concentrations, leaves of absence, directed studies, etc.;
12. In accordance with the BHE/MSCA Contract, refer to the Chairperson (for full-faculty) or MSW Program Coordinator (for adjunct faculty) any concern or complaint about a faculty member.

ADJUSTMENTS TO MSW PLANS OF STUDY AND/OR STUDENT STATUS

Time Limits

No graduate course completed toward the MSW degree may be more than six years old at the time degree requirements are completed with the exception of elective courses accepted as transfer credits at matriculation.

Transfer Policies and Procedures

In accordance with the School of Graduate Studies policies, applicants accepted for admission into the MSW Program who have taken social work courses at a CSWE-accredited MSW program but who did not matriculate for that program may transfer a maximum of nine credit hours. For applicants who matriculated at another MSW Program accredited by CSWE, a maximum of 30 credits may be transferred.

The Transfer of Credit Form is available online at salemstate.edu/academics, click on the School of Graduate Studies and then click on Forms on the menu on the left. Required documentation includes the course syllabi, course description form from the catalogue, and an official transcript. Please note that a minimum grade of "B" is required for transfer credits.

The following provisions apply to applicants seeking to transfer social work courses taken on a matriculated and non-matriculated basis at a CSWE-accredited MSW Program:

- A grade of "B" or better must be earned in coursework from programs that use a grading system and "pass" from programs that use a pass/fail grading system;
- Decisions on acceptance of transferred courses are based on official transcripts and the syllabi used at the time the course was taken – the latter is reviewed to assess comparability with regard to course objectives, readings, assignments;
- All courses submitted for transfer credit at the time of application must be completed prior to the student's acceptance into SSU's MSW Program;
- Initial review and approval of transfer requests are made by the MSW Program Coordinator with final approval given by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies;
- Final decisions about acceptance of transfer credits are made after applicants' acceptance into SSU's MSW Program but before classes begin;
- Official transcripts of courses taken at other institutions are filed with the School of Graduate Studies.

For applicants who matriculated at another MSW Program accredited by CSWE, the following additional provisions also apply:

- A letter from the chief administrator of the MSW program from which the applicants is transferring stating that the applicant is a student in good academic and professional standing;
- Students who have completed foundation field education requirements must submit a copy of the final evaluation from their faculty field liaison.

Course Waiver

In rare circumstances, such as when a student has completed extensive graduate work in the subject area of a required course, a student may want to request a waiver for required course or courses. However, course waivers will not be granted for required Practice courses or Field Education courses. A course waiver is distinct from instances in which students wish to transfer credits from another accredited school of social work. Requests for a course waiver must be submitted to the MSW Program Coordinator at least six (6) weeks prior to the start of the term in which the course is being offered. Within two weeks of the waiver being requested, the Program Coordinator will schedule a time with the student to take a waiver exam. The chair of the sequence which includes the course determines the content of the waiver exam. The waiver exam will be graded (Pass/Fail) prior to the start of the term by the chair of the sequence or her/his designee. If the waiver exam is passed the student receives a waiver for the course, but does not receive credit for the course. The student must take another course in order to complete the requisite number of credits to complete the MSW Program.

Withdrawal from Courses

To withdraw from a course, the student must complete the appropriate Form available from the MSW Program Coordinator. A grade of "W" will be assigned for students who withdraw prior to the 4th class meeting (a distinct date or the 2nd class is set for withdrawals during Summer Sessions). **Withdrawal after that deadline will result in a grade of "F," except when extenuating circumstances are involved and withdrawal is approved.** Students who wish to withdraw without academic penalty after the deadline must present their case in writing before the end of the course to the MSW Program Coordinator and the Dean of the Graduate School, for appropriate action.

Change of Concentration Requests

Student requests to change Concentration Area must be submitted by completing the Request for Revision of Educational Program Form available in the Administrative Office, Academic Building Room 104A. The Form is completed by the student and the student's Academic Advisor and then submitted to the MSW Program Coordinator's Office, at least four months prior to entering Concentration Area Field Education. The MSW Program Coordinator will bring the request to the following meeting of the School's Administrative Committee for consideration. The School's Administrative Committee includes the MSW Program Coordinator, the MSW Field Education Coordinator, the School's Chairperson, and the School's Associate Dean. The MSW Program Coordinator will record the Administrative Committee's decision and communicate the Committee's decision in a letter to the student's address on file.

Change of Plan of Study Request

Students who find an exceptional problem in completing their plan of study, i.e., full-time or part-time, must file a Request For Revision of Education Program Form – the form is available in the School of Social Work Administrative Office Room 104A, with the Academic Advisor, or the MSW Program Coordinator. The change of plan should be discussed with and the form signed by the Academic Advisor and filed with the MSW Program Coordinator by **May 1 (for Fall semester) and December 1 (for Spring semester)**. The Form must include the student's revised course of study and be forwarded to the MSW Program Coordinator's Office in a timely manner. The MSW Program Coordinator will bring the request to the next possible meeting of the School's Administrative Committee for consideration and will communicate the Committee's decision in a letter sent to the student's address on file.

The deadlines listed above might not work for study plan changes that involve the timing of Field Education. For example, the May 1 deadline will not allow sufficient time for planning any summer placement during that same year and might not allow sufficient time for the Field Education Office to secure a field education placement for the following September. In such instances, requests

made by March 1st are more likely to result in an appropriate field education arrangement. While every attempt will be made to honor student requests, the Program's commitment to agencies and institutions providing field education practica must also be considered.

Leave of Absence

A leave of absence is a period during which students maintain their status, but are entitled to none of the services of the University provided by the payment of tuition or fees. The total leave allowed a student during his/her graduate program is two semesters, which need not be taken consecutively.

An application for a leave of absence may be filed at any time during the academic year for the following semester(s). A leave of absence may begin during a semester, provided the completed application for leave is processed before the end of the fourth class session; in this case the entire semester is counted toward the leave. Please note that Field Education and SWK 855 Designing Social Work Research and SWK 856 Conducting Social Work Research are considered year-long courses, so leaving mid-year will require repetition of the first semester.

Students desiring leaves of absence must complete Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Form available online at salemstate.edu/academics, click on the School of Graduate Studies and then click on Forms on the menu on the left. and Request For Revision of Education Program Form (available from the School of Social Work Administrative Office). Student must review the leave of absence request with his/her Academic Advisor. The MSW Program Coordinator is available to the student and the academic advisor for consultation on leave of absence requests. The MSW Program Coordinator must sign the request and forward it to the School's Administrative Committee prior to the Committee's next meeting.

A date of return must be agreed upon in advance and stated on the Leave of Absence form. A student who fails to return on the agreed date will be considered to have withdrawn from the University. Students on leave are fully responsible for returning on the agreed date.

A leave of absence does not waive the mandatory requirement that all MSW course work be completed in six years. The "six year" point begins at matriculation and ends at graduation.

Withdrawal from MSW Degree Program

A student may officially withdraw from the MSW Program; be dismissed from the MSW Program; or be administratively withdrawn. The student is responsible for submitting all appropriate withdrawal forms and following the School of Graduate Studies regulations concerning dates, and consequences for filing after certain deadlines. Withdrawal from courses is a separate process from withdrawal from the MSW Program—both must be done.

Non-attendance does not constitute official withdrawal from the program. It is necessary to complete an official withdrawal form and file it with the MSW Program Coordinator who will review it with the School's Associate Dean and forward it to the Graduate School. These forms are available in the School of Social Work Office. Grounds for administrative withdrawal include but are not limited to: nonattendance, failure to register for classes, and failure to meet academic and professional standards.

MSW PROGRAM GUIDELINES FOR GRADING AND EVALUATION

Professional Standards

MSW Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the Salem State University School of Social Work *Professional Standards for Social Work Students* (see Appendix IV of this Handbook).

Maintaining Academic Standing

See Section 2.4.2 of the School of Social Work *Professional Standards for Social Work Students* in this Handbook.

Attendance

Regular attendance in all courses is required. The specific attendance policy for each course will be established by the course instructor and noted in course syllabi.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a temporary grade assigned to a student who has not completed course work due to extraordinary circumstances. **It is the student's responsibility to initiate the request for an Incomplete prior to the final assignments due date and the assignment of final grades and to comply with whatever additional requirements individual instructors have stipulated with regard to Incompletes.** The student is required to meet with the instructor and complete an "Incomplete Agreement Form" that details the materials to be submitted and the date by which course work is to be completed. It is the instructor's prerogative to deny or accept the student's request for an "I" grade and to determine the length of time he/she requires to read and grade the student's completed work.

If the instructor grants the request for an Incomplete, instructor and student sign the "Incomplete Agreement Form" with the specific date all course work is to be completed. The instructor is responsible for retaining a copy of the "Incomplete Agreement Form," giving one to the student, and submitting one to the MSW Program Coordinator.

All course work for which an "I" grade was assigned must be completed and graded by the end of the sixth week following the end of the semester in which the relevant course was taken. The instructor is responsible for changing the grade online. **If the student fails to receive a grade for the course by this deadline, the grade of "I" will automatically change to an "F."**

In addition to the above, the following policies also apply to "I" grades:

- Students carrying any "I" grade in the foundation curricula will not be allowed to register for concentration level courses including Concentration Field Education;
- Students returning from a leave of absence and carrying any "I" grade must complete all course work and receive a passing grade for such course work at least two weeks prior to the first day of classes for the semester in which they are returning;
- Students are responsible for maintaining contact with instructors from whom they have negotiated an "I" grade including instructors who are no longer teaching at Salem State University during any given semester.
- Students should inform the Chair or the MSW Program Coordinator if they are unable to make contact with their instructor.

MSW Criteria for Evaluation of Assignments

Instructor's evaluation of the assignments will be based upon the following criteria:

- (1) **Critical Thinking** - the degree to which the student demonstrates the ability to evaluate and critique ideas.
- (2) **Conceptual Ability** - the degree to which the student demonstrates the ability to conceptualize, abstract, think logically and organize ideas into a conceptual whole. Grades will be determined on the basis of the student's ability to move across a continuum of abstraction to concreteness, to deal systematically with material and to deal with the parts as well as the whole.
- (3) **Communication** - the degree to which the student demonstrates the ability to organize and transmit ideas in verbal or written form. Grades will be determined by the ability to use proper syntax, express ideas clearly, punctuate, spell, and (where appropriate) employ symbolic and non-verbal modes of communication.
Also note University's minimum writing standards on page 28.
- (4) **Research** - the degree to which the student demonstrates that the subject matter has been adequately researched. Grades will be determined by the ability to demonstrate in the assignment that material is supported by empirical research (if appropriate), theory, and practice wisdom, and that (where appropriate) differing views are reflected.
- (5) **Application** - the degree to which the student's work demonstrates relevance to practice. Grades will be determined by the ability to extract implications as well as applications for social work practice.
- (6) **Creativity** - the degree to which the paper/project suggests innovative approaches to the provision of social services or to the facilitation of social and/or personal change. This can be demonstrated directly through explication of original ideas or suggestions of innovative combination of theory and practice approaches that can better meet identified problems.

Grading System

In most instances, graduate students will receive letter grades, as follows: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, F, I. Pass/Conditional Pass/Fail grade is given for the field education courses. The grade point equivalent of the letter grade at the graduate level shall be calculated in accordance with the following:

A	4.0	(95-100)	B	3.0	(84-86)	C	2.0	(74-76)	Field – PASS (P)	A-	3.7
B+	3.3	(87-89)	C+	2.3	(77-79)	F	0.0		I - Incomplete		

Graduate Grading Guidelines

- | | |
|----|---|
| A | Insightful scholarship, valid research, creativity, original application, and genuine promise of continuing growth in the field of study. |
| A- | Solid scholarship, sound research, creative application, and promise of growth in the field of study. |
| B+ | Acceptable scholarship and research, valid application, and probable promise of growth in the field of study. |
| B | Adequate scholarship and research, relevant application, and possible promise of growth in the field of study. |

- B- Somewhat adequate scholarship and research, relevant application, and possible promise of growth in the field of study.
- C+ Inadequate scholarship, research, and application suggesting minimal prospects for growth in the field of study.
- C Inadequate scholarship, research and application requiring improvement in future performance.
- C- Inadequate scholarship, research and application requiring major improvement in future performance.
- F Unacceptable graduate work.

Please note information on the University’s Minimum Writing Standards and Writing Center in section below.

Flagging Forms

One method by which Academic Advisors are kept informed of their advisees’ progress in the MSW Program is through the MSW Flagging procedure. This procedure permits Academic Advisors and students to be aware of student’s potential difficulties in a course prior to the student’s receipt of the final grade. At the mid-point of each semester, the MSW Program Coordinator reminds all instructors of the School’s Flagging Forms. Class instructors are asked to complete a Flagging Form for any student in their class who they believe is in academic difficulty at the mid-semester point and in jeopardy of receiving a grade of less than “B” in the course. Instructors will make every effort to discuss the “flagging” with the student prior to the completion of the Flagging Form. Flagging Forms are filed with the MSW Program Coordinator who routes the form to the student’s Academic Advisor.

While Flagging Forms may be filed at any point in the semester, faculty are asked to identify concerns prior to the pre-registration, mid-semester period. Since students are required to meet with Academic Advisors in order to receive their pre-registration materials, the Flagging procedure allows for a mid-term discussion of student progress. Please see section on *Professional Standards for Social Work Education* for complete discussion on the use of Flagging Forms.

MSW PROGRAM COURSE ARCHIVES AND STUDENT RECORDS

The MSW Program maintains an archive of MSW course syllabi for a maximum of six years. Students need to be aware of the fact that some state licensing bodies and other graduate programs may require that MSW graduates submit course syllabi regardless of the year the course was taken. **Neither the School nor the University will provide course materials that are more than six years old; thus, it is highly recommended that students keep their own copies of course syllabi and field education evaluations.** All course syllabi include a course description as well as course requirements and readings. The University maintains online archives of the School of Graduate Studies catalogues dating back to Academic Year 2004-2005; these catalogues include course descriptions.

Official transcripts, regardless of year, are available through the University’s Registrar’s Office.

The MSW Program maintains MSW Program files on all students. The files contain admission materials, informal transcripts, field education evaluations, written materials submitted for a *Student Educational Review Committee* meetings, and copies of all formal written correspondence from the School or Program to the student and vice versa. The MSW Program honors the student’s right to view her or his file. The student may view her or his file in the Associate Dean’s Office during regular business hours with the Associate Dean or MSW Program Coordinator present. A student’s request to view her or his file must be made in writing (not email) with at least fifteen working days advance notice. A student may request

copies of materials in her or his file. This request must be made in writing (not email) and delineate the specific materials being requested as well as the student's date of birth and address to which the copies should be sent. Copying costs will be charged to the student at the current market rate and will be sent within 30 days of the request. **MSW Program files for graduates are maintained for a maximum of six years. Again, official transcripts, regardless of year, are available through the University's Registrar's Office.**

COMPUTER RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Students have access to computers for completion of class assignment and research projects. Computer labs are equipped with various software packages. The main computer labs are located in the student lounge area of the Academic Building, the Harrington Building (Lower South Campus) and Meier Hall (North Campus). Lab hours are posted on the University's website or students may call Informational Technology Services (ITS) at Ext 6871 for hours as well as details on available software and other computer services. The ITS Department is located at Central Campus.

THE LIBRARY: The Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons

The Frederick E. Berry Library and Learning Commons at Salem State University is located on North Campus, in a new facility opening in September 2013. The main entrance is located off the new quad (green space in front of the library, adjacent to Meier Hall). A second, ground floor entrance is located off College Drive. The learning commons brings the Center for Academic Excellence, Academic Advising, TRIO programs, Disabilities Services, the Writing Center, and the Honors Program together. Visit www.salemstate.edu/library; a page of social work library resources can be found at: <http://libguides.salemstate.edu/socialwork>.

The library includes:

- A combined circulation, reserve, interlibrary loan and reference desk where you can check out and return library materials, request resources from other libraries throughout the world, and find research assistance. IT support is also available at this desk during all hours of library operation. For the most current hours, please call the Library hours line at 978-542-6808.
- A collection of over 325,000 high-quality scholarly books, periodicals and media. This is in addition to access to an expanding collection of electronic resources covering the full array of academic disciplines, including over 300,000 electronic books and 57,000 journals.
- Over 1,000 study seats, in a variety of forms – including collaborative workstations, lounge seating, study carrels, laptop tables, individual and group study tables, and twelve group study rooms where students can collaborate on class projects, gather in study groups, and meet for scholarly purposes.
- More than 150 public access computer workstations networked to printing as well as an adaptive technology workstation near the service desk and in a specialized group study room on the first floor. Copiers are also available.
- South Campus satellite study space in Academic Building lounge including computers, tables, lounge chairs, and a printing station. A library book-drop is located just outside the entrance to Harrington Building.

Tara Fitzpatrick is the Reference and Instruction Librarian for the Social Work, Criminal Justice, Psychology, and Sociology. She can be reached by email at tfitzpatrick@salemstate.edu or x6765. She welcomes the opportunity to help you with your library needs. However, do not expect to meet with her for help at the "midnight hour."

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK COMMITTEES

Each year, MSW students are invited to become members of various committees of the School of Social Work listed below. Following is a brief description of the School's committees open to student participation. If you are interested in serving on any of these committees, please contact the MSW Program Coordinator.

MSW Curriculum Committee

The MSW Curriculum Committee includes the following members: the MSW Program Coordinator; the MSW Field Education Coordinator; at least one MSW student; and representatives from each of the MSW sequences (HBSE, Research, Social Policy, Practice and Field Education) and the MSW Program's Concentration Areas (Child and Family Services; Health/Mental Health; and Older Adult/End of Life Care Services). In addition, the Committee makes an effort to include at least one practitioner from the professional community. The MSW Curriculum Committee primary responsibilities involve review and development of the MSW curricula and educational policies as well as evaluation standards and procedures. The Committee also bears responsibility for ensuring that the MSW Program's curricula are in keeping with the standards established by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Accreditation.

Cultural Diversity Committee

The Cultural Diversity Committee is composed of at least three faculty members and one BSW and one MSW student. The Committee's primary responsibilities include the review, development, and recommendation in the area of recruitment and retention of administrators, faculty, staff and students for the purpose of ensuring diversity. Contributes to increased awareness of and sensitivity to diversity among the various constituencies of the School of Social Work and the University; facilitates interaction or activities among administrators, faculty, staff, and students that contribute to an appreciation of each other's diversity; cultivates skills and activities that overcome discrimination and oppression; monitors, advises, and assists in the development of diversity content in the School of Social Work curricula. The Committee also collaborates with students and faculty in other schools and departments in coordinating the University and School's annual Human Rights Convocation.

International Studies Committee (Under Revision)

The International Studies Committee is composed of at least three faculty members and one BSW and one MSW student. The Committee's primary responsibility is to explore and oversee the protocol and planning for international study courses which enrich the students' exposure to global perspectives and the world wide human service study. International study courses to date, with seminars before and after travel, have involved study trips to El Salvador, Germany and India.

Student Services Committee

Student Services Committee is composed of at least five members, including the Associate Dean of the School of Social Work, the two respective faculty advisors for the two student organizations (START and GO) who are selected by the respective student organization and who serve as the Committee's Co-Chairs. START and GO also respectively select at least one BSW and one MSW student to serve on the Committee for the current academic year. The Committee recommends policies and procedures relevant to student life here at the School and assists in the development of the School's student organizations.

SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE STUDENT ORGANIZATION

In 1988, the MSW students formed the Graduate Student Organization (G.O.). The goals of G.O. are as follows:

- to develop and maintain communications among MSW social work students, faculty and the general public
- to provide a means for united action on issues of social concern
- to recruit student members for the School's on-going committees.

In recent years, GO has sponsored an annual event during Social Work Month in March. G.O. often collaborates with S.T.A.R.T., the BSW Program's student organization.

STUDENT MAILBOXES AND LISTSERV

All School of Social Work students have a mail folder in the file cabinets located on the first floor in Academic Building. The MSW students "mailboxes" are in the right-hand cabinet. It is requested that students regularly check their mail folder.

Upon matriculation, your SSU e-mail address will be added to the MSW Program List Serv which is the main communication system for distribution of important information, announcements, events, registration alerts, etc. It is very important that you read all notices distributed in the Listserv.

Please note that all Salem State University School of Social Work students are required to obtain a Salem State University email account upon matriculating into the MSW Program. All MSW students are required to use their official SSU email account where they will receive important information and announcements relevant to the MSW Program. Faculty, administrators, and staff from the School of Social Work, as well as all departments of SSU, including the Registrar and Financial Aid, will only use the students' official SSU email account to send and receive messages. Questions or help with issues with setting up your new email account can be directed to the ITS helpdesk at it-helpdesk@salemstate.edu or by phone at (978) 542-2036.

FACULTY AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF MAILBOXES

All School of Social Work faculty have individual mailboxes. The faculty and professional staff have mailboxes located on the left wall inside Suite AB105.

All School of Social Work full-time faculty must post office hours. Adjunct faculty will provide students with information on office hours and means for reaching them. Please contact the MSW Program Coordinator if you are having difficulty scheduling a time to meet with your advisor or faculty.

WRITING SKILLS AND WRITING CENTER

As noted in the School's *Professional Standards for Social Work Education* (see Appendix IV), we strongly emphasize that students must develop and maintain basic writing skills. Students who fail to master these basic skills will encounter difficulties in their coursework, field education, and, ultimately, in finding a social work position. We bring to your attention the University's policy concerning minimum writing standards and information about the Writing Center where you can find help with specific written assignments. We will not accept a written assignment that does not meet the minimum standards established by the University. These policies apply to both BSW and MSW students.

The Writing Center: Students can receive feedback on their writing from a trained and supportive reader. The staff works with all of the Salem State Community--undergraduate and graduate students, alumni,

faculty, and staff. Their goal is to help you become a better, more confident writer. Students can get help on writing assignments, developing and organizing ideas, documenting sources and avoiding plagiarism, and solving grammatical problems. The Writing Center Staff includes a team of trained undergraduate and graduate students from all academic disciplines, led by Jan Lindholm, Faculty Coordinator and Associate Professor of English, and Bill Coyle, Staff Assistant. Located in Meier Hall 220, North Campus 978.542.6491. The Writing Center offers individualized assistance in writing to students who are weak in basic writing skills, students who need special guidance for a particular writing task, and students who simply desire some individual help in developing their writing potential. It is recommended that MSW students seek assistance from one of the Center's co-directors

Minimum Writing Standards

The University holds the following policy on minimum writing standards: No expository writing assignment submitted for a course will receive a grade of C or above unless it has the following:

1. A clear and readily identifiable thesis statement.
2. A clear and coherent overall structure.
3. Paragraphs with topic sentences and adequate, specific development.
4. Standard but varied sentence structure and expression.
5. Standard usage, punctuation, and spelling.
6. Accurate documentation when necessary.

Note: These standards may be amended by the instructor to meet the specific needs of assignments that have more specialized writing requirements, such as professional social work courses.

Within the MSW Program, citations, references and formatting papers should be completed according to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA)*, 5th edition. This Handbook includes the School's own guide to this style manual (see Appendix V).

DISABILITY SERVICES

Salem State University is committed to providing equal access to the educational experience for all students in compliance with *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act* and to providing all reasonable academic accommodations, aids, and adjustments.

To achieve this goal, the University maintains *Disability Services*. The Disability Services office promotes an accessible educational and campus-wide experience by coordinating services and accommodations for students with disabilities. Salem State is committed to providing appropriate services and accommodations that allow self-identified students with disabilities to access all resources, programs and activities at the university as stated in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you have any questions or to request accommodations, please contact the disability services office at 978.542.6217 or disability-services@salemstate.edu.

This office is responsible for assuring that students receive the services and accommodations to which they are entitled. The staff works with students to review documentation, determine reasonable accommodations on the basis of disability, and act as a liaison between students and faculty/administration on concerns relating to those services and accommodations.

Disability Services also provides academic support to students with disabilities including learning disability; mobility impairments, medical disability, blindness and visual impairments; deafness; psychiatric disability; and traumatic brain injury.

Students are responsible for identifying themselves to *Disability Services* staff and informing them of the need for review. Students must present each individual instructor with evidence of their being registered with *Disability Services*. **Individual instructors are prohibited from providing accommodations to students who are not registered with Disability Services.** Students with disabilities must initiate contact with the office and schedule an appointment to obtain appropriate review and/or services. The office is located in

Meier Hall, first floor. *Disability Services* telephone numbers are: Voice: 978-542-6217; TTY: 978-542-7146.

COUNSELING AND HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Now and then, everyone runs into a dilemma, a decision, or a personal question that is difficult to resolve. University students are surely no exception. The very nature of the student's situation in life involves important challenges, decisions, changing relationships and uncertainties.

Counseling and Health Services: Counseling and health services help you stay healthy at Salem State with convenient, high-quality primary care and personal counseling. The Health Education program offers consultation on alcohol and drug issues, as well as other health topics. Our services are free to students, with the exception of some lab tests. Call or stop by the office for a confidential appointment. All students are required to bring their ClipperCard with them when they are seeking services. The office is located at the Ellison Campus Center, suite 107, North Campus. Stop by or phone 978.542.6413/978.542.6410.

AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The following are awards and scholarships given specifically to MSW students:

The Daniel Aaron Collins Memorial Scholarship*

This scholarship was established as a memorial to Daniel Aaron Collins, son of Carol and David Collins. The scholarship provides support each year for a candidate enrolled in the MSW degree program. The criteria for receiving the scholarship are as follows: a strong record of academic achievement; references from social work faculty members; and a demonstration of financial need.

The Elaine S. Marks Scholarship Prize*

This prize was established as an acknowledgement Elaine S. Marks' dedication to the creation of the MSW Program at Salem State University. The criteria for receiving the scholarship are as follows: references by MSW faculty who identify student's demonstrated success against difficult odds; strong record of academic achievement; and financial need.

The MSW Social Policy Paper Award

This award (not a scholarship) is given in honor of Emerita Professor Marguerite Rosenthal. The award is based on a social policy paper written as part of the Social Policy Foundation Curriculum. Details of award criteria are distributed in foundation social policy classes and on the MSW student e-list.

Highest Cumulative Grade Point Average

In May of each year, the MSW student completing his/her degree requirements with the highest cumulative grade point average receives an award from the School of Social Work.

Student Who Has Contributed the Most to the School of Social Work

The MSW student who, in the judgment of the faculty, has contributed the most for the School of Social Work shall receive an award from the School of Social Work. The nominations are submitted to as well as reviewed and selected by the School's Student Services Committee (student members of the Student Services Committee do not review or vote on this award), but are encouraged to submit nominations.

*To be eligible for these two scholarships, students must submit a scholarship application through the University's Financial Aid Office. There is a standard application for all scholarships. Consider noting your specific interest these two scholarships and your eligibility for funding from other scholarships. Watch your email for application deadlines.

PHI ALPHA HONOR SOCIETY- TAU PHI CHAPTER, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

The School of Social Work affiliated of **Phi Alpha, Tau Phi Chapter** of the National Social Work Honor Society as of 2013. Its members are drawn from both undergraduate and graduate programs. In addition to the eligibility requirements bellow, In addition student must demonstrate that they meet the professional standards required of them as outlined in the Professional Standards for the School of Social Work.

Phi Alpha is designed to encourage and recognize scholarship and academic excellence. Both graduate and undergraduate students are eligible. Individual lifetime membership is \$20.00. The primary benefit to you is the public recognition of your achievement which is an honor to list on your resume and other career documents, participation in chapter and national honor society activities, scholarships and networking on a national basis.

As of the Spring Semester of senior year, students in the **BSW Program** who have Senior Status to graduate, a GPA of 3.25 overall GPA (transfer credits not applicable) and 3.7 SWK GPA or better are eligible for induction and lifetime membership. Students in the **MSW Program's** General Study Plans must have completed all but 11 credits towards their MSW degree (transfer credits not applicable) and a 3.85 cumulative grade point average and be prepared for program completion in May or August of the current year. Students enrolled in the advanced standing study plan must have all but 3 credits towards their MSW degree (transfer credits not applicable) and have a 3.85 cumulative grade point average. For more information go to: salemstate.edu/academics/schools/5663.php

MSW STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The MSW Student Handbook has been developed as a reference guide with materials most pertinent to your experience as an MSW student. However, there are many rights and responsibilities held by you as a student at Salem State University. Many of these rights and responsibilities are delineated in the University's School of Graduate Studies Catalogue and Graduate Student Handbook as well as the Undergraduate Catalogue (both at www.salemstate.edu/registrar/catalogues).

Please note that the School of Social Work maintains some academic standards and policies that supersede the University and School of Graduate Studies standards. With regard to academic grievances and appeals, it is the policy of the University and the School of Graduate Studies that the processes in place at the School of Social Work must be completed before a grievance or appeal is considered by the School of Graduate Studies or the University. The *Professional Standards for Social Work Students* included in this Handbook delineates the School of Social Work processes for academic grievances and appeals.

The School of Social Work faculty and staff are committed to maintaining an atmosphere that promotes inclusion and one that is free from discrimination. The School expects that all members of its community will be treated with dignity and respect. Should you encounter any form of discrimination, including sexual harassment, you may proceed directly to contact the University's Dean of Student Life at 978.542.6401. The Office is located on North Campus and is open during business hours.

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID (978/542-6112)

The primary purpose of financial aid is to provide financial assistance to those students who without such assistance would be unable to attend Salem State University. A student must be maintaining satisfactory academic progress in a course of study according to the institution's policies for continued eligibility for student financial aid funds. The satisfactory academic progress policy is in the School of Graduate Studies University catalogue.

Graduate students are encouraged to contact Lois Fitzpatrick Daley at ctr_lfitzpatri@salemstate.edu or 978.542.6112 for information on how to apply for financial aid. Further information can be found on-line by clicking on Financial Aid at www.salemstate.edu/admissions.

When making inquiries about financial aid, be sure to indicate your status as a graduate student.

Loans:

Most financial aid through the University is in the form of low interest federal education loans. In order to apply for these loans, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). We recommend that you apply online at www.fafsa.gov.edu. Once your form is processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR). The Salem State University code is 002188. All forms and applications are available on the University web site at www.salemstate.edu/finaid.

Additional Financial Assistance Sources**Graduate Assistantships:**

Each academic year, a number of Graduate Assistantships are available for qualified students. To be eligible to apply, a student must be fully accepted into a graduate program at Salem State University and plan to carry at least two graduate courses per semester. Other requirements include a minimum GPA of 3.2 for undergraduate work and a minimum verbal GRE score of 500. In lieu of the GRE, a minimum Miller Analogies Score of 40 is required. Renewal of an assistantship requires a minimum GPA of 3.3 in the applicant's graduate field of study. Applications for Graduate Assistantships are available through The School of Graduate Studies, Sullivan Building, Room 101.

Each assistantship carries a monthly stipend and an award of tuition remission for all courses except directed study, courses by arrangement, and thesis courses. The stipend is for 10 hours per week rendered to the department to which the assistant is assigned.

There are two categories of assistantships: faculty research assistants and academic program assistants. Faculty research assistants support individual faculty members on their scholarly work throughout the academic year. Academic program assistants provide support services to specific academic programs. For more information and to obtain an application, contact the Graduate School at 978.542.6323.

Tuition Remission:

Full time state employees of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are eligible for 50% tuition remission. Forms to facilitate this process are available through your employer. At the time of registration, you will need to present the completed tuition remission form with signature of the authorizing person from your agency or organization. Please note that a Directed Study is not eligible for 50% tuition remission.

Employer Tuition Reimbursement:

Many employers will reimburse their employees in part or in full for courses considered job related. Students are advised to check with their employer's Human Resource office for more information about reimbursement.

Other Resources:

We strongly encourage you to explore other resources: grants, foundations, community organizations, and tuition reimbursement from your employer. Helpful guides about financial aid are available at our financial aid office or at local libraries. Online listings of financial aid are available as well, e.g. www.fastweb.com. or www.finaid.com.

REMEMBER: Financial aid awards are not renewable. You must reapply each year.

HEALTH FEE

A health fee is required of all full time (9 credits or more) graduate students.

OFFICIAL GRADUATE SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY

The School of Graduate Studies Commencement Ceremony is held in May of each year. This ceremony involves all of the University's graduate-level programs (Social Work as well as Nursing, Education, Criminal

Justice, and Arts & Sciences Masters degrees). The Ceremony is held at the O’Keefe Center and is followed by a reception for all attendees.

MSW students eligible to graduate will receive notice of "Intent to Graduate" forms at the Graduate School Office. This form should be completed by the student and filed no later than **February 1st** of the year of graduation. Failure to file before the deadline will postpone degree conferral. A Commencement Fee is required at the time of filing this application. No degree will be conferred and no degree transcripts will be issued unless all tuition and fees have been paid in full. All degree requirements must be completed prior to the commencement date.

Students enrolled in the Program’s Three-Year Plan of Study complete their course and field education requirements in August rather than May. The University allows MSW students with eight (8) credits or less remaining to complete their degree requirements to “walk” at the May commencement. Request to Walk and Intent to Graduate Forms are available from the Office of Student Records (Registrar’s Office). These forms should be completed by the student and filed no later than **February 1st** of the year of graduation. Failure to file before the deadline will postpone degree conferral. A Commencement Fee is required at the time of filing this application. No degree will be conferred and no degree transcripts will be issued unless all tuition and fees have been paid in full.

Students who complete over the summer – whether in Summer I or Summer II – will have their degrees conferred in August. It is typically the last Friday in August. Degrees will be recorded and visible on official transcripts within one week of that date. Students can view their unofficial transcript in Navigator and once they see the degree recorded on it will know that an official copy of the transcript is available from the Registrar. Diplomas are shipped directly to the student with an expected delivery of mid-October.

A completion certificate is issued to students in the interim that states they have completed all MSW degree requirements. This certificate has been approved by the Massachusetts Board of Registration and can be used in students’ applications for licensing examination prior to the official degree conferment.

COMMENCEMENT HONORS

Graduate students who achieve a grade point average of 3.85 to 3.94 will receive the degree **With Honors** and students who receive a grade point average of 3.95 and above will receive the degree **With Highest Honors**. **Please note that determining the grade point average for commencement honors is calculated only on courses completed at Salem State University.** Please also see *Awards and Scholarships for MSW Students* in this Handbook.

AFTER GRADUATION (LICENSING, JOBS)

LICENSING: As of July 1980, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts instituted the Social Work Licensure Law. Under this law, persons calling themselves social workers and/or practicing social work, (including social workers in many agency settings), must be licensed by the Commonwealth. For social workers practicing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the following list includes a brief description of the levels of licensure:

LSW, Licensed Social Worker: Basic level of licensure, requiring a BSW from a CSWE accredited School of Social Work.

LCSW, Licensed Certified Social Worker: Intermediate level of licensure, requiring an MSW degree from a CSWE accredited School of Social Work.

LICSW, Licensed Independent Social Worker: Advanced level of licensure, requiring an MSW degree from a CSWE accredited School of Social Work and two years post-masters supervision and work experience.

For each of these levels of licensure, a written examination is required. To obtain more information about eligibility requirements and registration for the examination, go to www.naswma.org or <http://www.mass.gov/dpl/boards/sw/index/htm>.

NASW sponsors Licensing Exam Preparation Courses and usually one or more are scheduled here at Salem State University.

JOBS: The immediate career possibilities for social work graduates vary extensively depending on the geographical area, the general economic trends, and the student's particular field of interest. While the need for trained personnel to assist clients does not diminish, funding in both public and private agencies is often determined by economic factors and the willingness of funding sources to recognize needs

Graduates of the School of Social Work have had an excellent record of finding social service jobs. Our graduates are employed in a wide variety of settings and, thus, represent the breadth and depth of social work practice opportunities. Their employment settings include inpatient and outpatient health and mental health facilities; substance abuse treatment programs; residential and group care; public social service; child and family welfare; elderly home care; end-of-life care; schools; settlement houses; community development; and political advocacy. Positions provided to the school are posted in the school's first floor corridor near the student mailboxes door public access.

The MSW Program Coordinator arranges for job opportunities to be posted in convenient locations for students' review. The social work students' organizations (START and GO) periodically sponsor networking with alumni or information sessions pertinent to students' future employment. The University's Career Services Center (978-542-6406) is also available to undergraduate and graduate social work students. In connection with NASW student membership, students have access to the NASW Massachusetts Chapter website and newsletter (*FOCUS*) job postings in the relevant faculty contracts.

APPLICATION TO MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR "SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKER" LICENSURE

Salem State University School of Social Work is *not* a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) "approved site" for automatic granting of Initial Licensure for "School Social Worker/School Adjustment Counselor" licensure. However, the DESE and social work schools in Massachusetts have agreed that MSW graduates who submit the following materials to the DESE as part of request for an "internal panel review" will receive expedited review by the DESE:

- Documented completion of a school-based field education practicum – DESE form to be signed by appropriate personnel at the school where the practicum was completed;
- Letter of support from the dean or Associate Dean of the School of Social Work;
- Formal transcript from the University;
- Completion of basic testing as required by DESE.

It is critical that students be aware of the form noted under bullet number one. The School of Social Work cannot sign off on this form; it must be signed by the field instructor who directly supervised your work in the school setting as well as administrators at the practicum site. DESE wants to see that personnel at the practicum site have documented the required number of hours spent at the school site. It is highly recommended that students secure these signatures prior to leaving the school-based field education practicum, as doing so may not be practical at a later date. The MSW Program's faculty field liaison will work with the field instructor and student to assist in this process.

MSW students who anticipate applying for DESE licensure as a school social worker should enroll in the Child and Family Services Concentration, as only that concentration includes content relevant to coursework criteria required by the DESE. The school-based field education practicum is best completed as a concentration level field practicum. **It is critical that students inform the Field Education Office of their interest in school social work in order to secure the appropriate field education practica. For example, school-**

based field education practica are not available during summer sessions and, therefore, not an option for students enrolled in the three-year study plan. In addition, it is highly recommended that the students take Clinical Practice with Children and Adolescents as one of their electives.

In order to meet the DESE criteria for Initial Licensure as a school social worker, students must plan ahead and carefully consider their field education options (including discussion of career goals with academic advisor and field education staff), choice of concentration area, and electives. For questions regarding school social work licensure and requirements, please feel free to contact Cheryl Springer, or the School's Associate Dean, Carol Bonner. Please also consult the DESE website for licensure criteria.

FRIENDS OF THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK (ALUMNI GROUP)

All graduates of the School of Social Work are considered members of the Friends of the School of Social Work. There is a Board of Directors of the Friends and the Board is often searching for new members. Please contact Dr. Carol Bonner, if you are interested in serving on the Board after graduation. The Board meets monthly during the academic year. The Board organizes and sponsors two professional development events each year – one evening event in the fall and one Saturday event in March to honor Social Work Month. The Board is always interested in connecting with current students for networking and workplace recruitment efforts.

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

The Massachusetts Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers is one of the strongest and most active chapters of our profession's national organization. While you become a member to access student liability insurance, please consider becoming a permanent member. Membership gives you access to valuable services and sources, not the least of which is the Chapter's newsletter *Focus*. The Chapter sponsors many events specifically designed for students and new social work professionals. Several of the School's faculty and students are active Chapter members, serving on the Board of Directors and presenting at the Chapter's biennial symposium. The School's Coordinator of the MSW Program, Dr. Christopher Hudson, is currently serving as its President, and Dr. Yvonne Ruiz is serving as Vice-President. Watch for announcements of Chapter events on the first floor hallway tables and bulletin boards in the Academic Building. The Chapter's website www.naswma.org is a wonderful resource for information on legislation affecting social workers and our clients – check it out.