



WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

BSW PROGRAM

STUDENT HANDBOOK

This Edition Effective: Fall 2025

A Note from the BSW Program Director

Welcome to the Western Kentucky University, Undergraduate Social Work Program! This is a baccalaureate program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Graduates are awarded a Bachelor of Social Work or BSW which is recognized as the entry level degree for the practice of professional social work by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). Given that the Department of Social Work offers both undergraduate and graduate programs, the undergraduate program will be referred to as the BSW program.

The WKU BSW program was initially accredited by the CSWE in 1978. The BSW program currently has more than 275 pre-Majors and Majors. The goal of this handbook is to ensure that all pre-Majors, Majors, and students interested in undergraduate social work education have access to relevant information regarding the BSW program. This handbook is designed to provide students with relevant policies, procedures, and program requirements. It is designed to assist both pre-Majors who are considering social work as a Major, as well as social work Majors as they progress through the BSW program. The purpose of the handbook is to provide you with a source of helpful information concerning the general needs of social work students.

The BSW program at WKU will help prepare you in your goal of being a competent, ethical social work practitioner. Hopefully, you will find your experience with the program to be both stimulating and rewarding. The goal of the faculty is to provide you with an educational environment that is both challenging and supportive. It is within this context of challenge and support that you are encouraged to take advantage of the many opportunities that are available.

Make the most of your interactions with the WKU BSW program. Opportunities for personal and professional growth await you. The faculty possesses tremendous expertise, knowledge, and skills. Your relationship with the faculty as your instructors, advisors, and mentors will assist you as you begin your career in social work.

Once again, welcome to the WKU BSW program.

Whitney Cassity-Caywood, Ph.D., L.C.S.W.
Director, BSW Program

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Western Kentucky University

WKU Mission

Western Kentucky University (WKU) prepares students of all backgrounds to be productive, engaged, and socially responsible citizen-leaders of a global society. The University provides research, service and lifelong learning opportunities for its students, faculty, and other constituents. WKU enriches the quality of life for those within its reach.

Statement of Purpose

WKU is engaged in internationally acclaimed, student-and-learning-centered academic programs. The WKU experience occurs on several unique campus environments and through an overarching spirit which attracts an intellectually exciting and diverse family of the nation's best students. WKU provides students of all backgrounds with rigorous academic programs in education, the liberal arts and sciences, the health sciences, and business, with emphasis at the baccalaureate and masters levels, complemented by relevant associate and doctoral level programs. The University places a premium on student learning; it is committed to ensuring value in a holistic learning experience through high standards for student achievement and conduct, a strong faculty, technological innovation, personalized attention, broad access, and public accountability for actions and outcomes. Out-of-the-classroom and study abroad experiences enhance learning, promote diversity, and contribute to the success of students.

The University encourages engaged research and public service in support of economic development, quality of life, and improvement of education at all levels. WKU faculty contribute

to the identification and solution of key social, economic, scientific, health, and environmental problems. An inspiring and talented faculty promotes a high level of creative activity and diverse scholarship and an entrepreneurial attitude designed to expand knowledge, improve instruction, increase learning, and provide applied solutions toward high-quality service to the state and nation. The University directly supports its constituents in its designated service areas of Kentucky with professional and technical expertise, cultural enrichment, and educational assistance.

Maintaining a campus of distinctive history and character, WKU sustains a student population of increasing quality. It fulfills its responsibility for access through its main and regional campuses, and through extensive distance learning opportunities. WKU recognizes that its mission continues to evolve in response to regional, national, and global changes, and the need for lifelong learning.

WKU's Mission and the QEP Theme

Western's Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) theme, Evidence & Argument: Information Mastery for Meaningful Discourse, is based on the premise that students who are more actively involved in their education will learn more, and thus be more successful during their educational careers and beyond.

The QEP theme was developed as a means of extending, focusing and realizing aspects of the university mission stated in its strategic plan, Climbing to Greater Heights.

QEP Student Learning Goal:

WKU students will bring evidence and argument to life through written, oral, and visual means. Graduates will apply and adapt this learning to their professional, social, and personal lives.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to gather sound and relevant evidence to address an issue. (Evidence-Gathering)
2. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize the assembled evidence. (Sense-Making)
3. WKU students will demonstrate the ability to articulate a logical and supported argument based on this analysis. (Argumentation)

Statement of Compliance

Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to equal opportunity in its educational programs and employment. It is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, marital status, age, uniform service, veteran status, pregnancy, childbirth or related conditions, or physical or mental disability. On request, the University will provide reasonable accommodations, including auxiliary aids and services, necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in all services, programs, activities and employment.

The University has published policies and procedures for investigating and/or addressing discrimination or harassment in its educational programs and/or employment. If you believe you have experienced discrimination or harassment in such programs, activities or employment, the University policies and procedures are included on the following website:

<http://wku.edu/policies/> (WKU Policies), in addition to the WKU Student Handbook, and

Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs. These publications, including information about University procedures, are available on the University's website (www.wku.edu), at:

WKU Policies: <http://www.wku.edu/policies/>

WKU Student Handbook: <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/>

WKU Undergraduate Catalog: <https://catalog.wku.edu/undergraduate>

WKU Graduate Catalog: <http://catalog.wku.edu/graduate>

Equal Opportunity/ADA

Compliance Office

Suite 317

Wetherby Admin. Bldg.

WKU

(270) 745-5121

Office of Human

Resources

Room G-25,

Wetherby Admin. Bldg.

WKU

(270) 745-5360

Inquiries about alleged discrimination may also be made directly to the Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, The Wannamaker Building, Suite 515, 100 Penn Square East, Philadelphia, PA 19107, (215) 656-8548; the Kentucky Commission on Human Rights, 332 W. Broadway, Suite 1400, Louisville, KY 40202, (800) 292-5566; or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, 600 Martin Luther King, Jr. Place, Suite 269, Louisville, Kentucky 40202, (502) 582-5851.

Western Kentucky University does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, veteran status, or marital status in admission to career and technical education programs and/or activities, or employment practices in accordance with Title VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Revised 1992, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

The following person has been designated to serve as the University's **Title IX Coordinator**:

Ms. Ena Demir

Executive Director and Title IX Coordinator

Institutional Equity

Wetherby Administration Building, Suite 317

1906 College Heights Blvd. #11001

Bowling Green, KY 42101-1001

titleix@wku.edu, 270-745-6867

Information regarding WKU's Title IX compliance, policies, and procedures may be found on the following websites: <https://www.wku.edu/eoo/titleix/> and <https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/titlenine.php>

College of Health and Human Services

[CHHS Strategic Plan 2021-2028](#)

Our Core Values, Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives

Core Values

The College of Health and Human Services, values each of the following as they relate to teaching, research, and service:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Foster and advocate for an inclusive environment in which all contributions are welcome.
- Community-engagement – Encourage students, faculty, and staff to involve the “community” in responding to issues that affect quality of life.
- Interdisciplinary/interprofessional approaches – Foster an environment in which faculty and students learn across disciplines to develop shared understanding.
- Ethical practices and integrity – Demonstrate ethical decision-making and behavior and teach the importance of ethical practices in our fields.
- Collaboration – Work together with key stakeholders to achieve common goals.
- Student-centered – Create an environment in which individual needs of the students are prioritized.
- Innovation – Foster an environment that supports the creation of new ideas.

Vision Statement

To be an innovative leader in the student-centered, interprofessional preparation of health and human services professionals by providing students with an inclusive, community-engaged, and interdisciplinary academic experience.

Mission Statement

We prepare health and human services professionals who will work to improve the quality of life in their communities and beyond.

Strategic Initiatives

- Increase recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of a diverse body of CHHS students.
- Enhance the productivity of research and creative activity among CHHS faculty and graduate students.
- Promote excellence in applied, interprofessional, student-centered teaching.
- Foster diversity, equity, and inclusion among CHHS students, faculty & staff.
- Enhance local, regional, and global community-engaged experiences for faculty, staff, and students.
- Create efficiencies, maximize resources, maintain facilities, and support the CHHS mission and vision.
- Increase alumni engagement through philanthropy, service and social media.

WKU Department of Social Work

The mission of the Department of Social Work at WKU is to prepare competent, ethical, anti-oppressive social work professionals for practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities thereby improving quality of life in the region and beyond.

WKU BSW Program

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) (2022) defines generalist practice as follows:

The baccalaureate program in social work prepares students for professional practice at a generalist level. The descriptions of the nine Social Work Competencies presented in the EPAS identify the knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes that are subsequently demonstrated in students' observable behaviors indicative of competence at a generalist level of practice. Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. (p. 17)

The curriculum of the BSW Program is intentionally designed to ensure that graduates are prepared to engage in competent and ethical entry-level professional practice, as described above, as well as to continue in graduate education. The core values of social work, respect for the dignity and worth of all people, and the promotion of social and economic justice are infused in each course in the curriculum.

Mission Statement

Grounded in a robust liberal arts foundation and guided by the core values and ethics of the profession, the mission of the Western Kentucky BSW Program is to prepare students to be competent, entry-level generalist practitioners who actively engage in anti-oppressive practices locally, nationally, and globally.

Goals

The goals of the BSW program at Western Kentucky University are:

1. To prepare generalist social workers who are culturally competent and adept at integrating professional knowledge, values, and skills for practice with diverse populations and multigenerational client systems of various sizes.
2. To foster a respect for diversity and a commitment to the common good through the advancement of social justice.
3. To instill a sense of oneself as a citizen of the world who is committed to ongoing professional growth and development.

Statement of Nondiscrimination

The WKU BSW program is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in all aspects of its program activities. The program respects and values diversity and does not discriminate on any basis including the following: race, color, gender, age, creed or religion, ethnic or national origin, disability, political orientation, or sexual orientation.

Accreditation

Western Kentucky University

Western Kentucky University is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools to award associate, baccalaureate, master's and specialist degrees.

BSW Program

The BSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):
<https://cswe.org/> Information about CSWE Accreditation is found here:

<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/>

Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards

The WKU BSW program curriculum complies with the most recent established standards for content set by the CSWE in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2022). CSWE's Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards can be found here:

<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>

Core Competencies

CSWE has adopted a competency-based education framework for its EPAS. A competency-based approach identifies and assesses what students demonstrated in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students' ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy (EPAS, 2022, p. 7).

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice. Social workers use rights-based, antiracist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the profession's history, mission, roles, and responsibilities and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the role of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice.

Social workers:

- a. make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context; The Nine Social Work Competencies 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards
- b. demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- c. use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- d. use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Social workers:

- a. advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels; and
- b. engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age, caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Social workers:

- a. demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels; and
- b. demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision-making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Social workers:

- a. apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs; and
- b. identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rightsbased, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Social workers:

- a. use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services; and
- b. apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of individuals, families, groups,

organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Social workers:

- a. apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- b. use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying strengths with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision-making.

Social workers:

- a. apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies; and
- b. demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Social workers:

- a. engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals; and
- b. incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Social workers:

- a. select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes; and
- b. critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Why the BSW?

The BSW is recognized by both the CSWE and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) as the beginning professional degree, indicating that students are prepared for generalist social work practice.

Professionally, graduates of BSW programs are eligible to pursue licensure at the baccalaureate level in states which offer or require such licensure for social work practice. Academically, the BSW is recognized as the basis for eligibility for advanced standing in master's level social work education (MSW). This means that a person holding the BSW may be able to complete the master's program in a shorter period of time than someone who holds a baccalaureate degree from another discipline. Please consult the graduate school of your choice for specific requirements concerning advanced standing.

Academic Conduct

The Western Kentucky University Catalog Issue 2024-2025:
<https://catalog.wku.edu/undergraduate/>

WKU's Student Life Policies Statement on Student Rights and Responsibilities:
<https://www.wku.edu/studentconduct/student-rights-responsibilities.php>.

In addition, students are encouraged to be familiar with the Student Academic Complaint Procedure. This procedure can also be found at: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php>

Students taking Social Work courses and interacting with the department and its faculty and staff are expected to understand and abide by these University policies and procedures.

NASW Code of Ethics

The NASW Code of Ethics is a set of standards that guide the professional conduct of social workers. For a complete review of the *NASW Code of Ethics*, please see:
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Purpose of the NASW Code of Ethics

Professional ethics are at the core of social work. The profession has an obligation to articulate its basic values, ethical principles, and ethical standards. The NASW Code of Ethics sets forth these values, principles, and standards to guide social workers' conduct. The Code is relevant to all social workers and social work students, regardless of their professional functions, the settings in which they work, or the populations they serve.

The NASW Code of Ethics serves six purposes:

1. The Code identifies core values on which social work's mission is based.
2. The Code summarizes broad ethical principles that reflect the profession's core values and establishes a set of specific ethical standards that should be used to guide social work practice.
3. The Code is designed to help social workers identify relevant considerations when professional obligations conflict or ethical uncertainties arise.
4. The Code provides ethical standards to which the general public can hold the social work profession accountable.
5. The Code socializes practitioners new to the field to social work's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards.
6. The Code articulates standards that the social work profession itself can use to assess whether social workers have engaged in unethical conduct. NASW has formal procedures to adjudicate ethics complaints filed against its members. * In subscribing to this Code, social workers are required to cooperate in its implementation, participate in NASW adjudication proceedings, and abide by any NASW disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

Ethical Principles

The following broad ethical principles are based on social work's core values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. These principles set forth ideals to which all social workers should aspire.

Value: *Service*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers' primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social injustice.*

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person.*

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*
Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships.*

Value: *Integrity*
Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Value: *Competence*
Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Ethical Standards

The following ethical standards are relevant to the professional activities of all social workers. These standards concern:

1. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to clients.
2. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to colleagues.
3. Social workers' ethical responsibilities in practice settings.
4. Social workers' ethical responsibilities as professionals.
5. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to the social work profession.
6. Social workers' ethical responsibilities to the broader society.

Upon applying for admission to the BSW program, students must sign a one-page form as part of the overall application process indicating they have read the *Code*, agree to support its principles, and understand that violation of the *Code* may result in their termination as a Social Work Major.

The Academic Program

Requirements for the Social Work Major

The primary goal of the BSW program is to prepare students for beginning level generalist social work practice. This preparation begins with a strong liberal arts base and required prerequisites followed by foundation curriculum content mandated by the CSWE, including: 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 Social Work Major consists of 54 semester hours, 48 hours in social work and 6 hours in advisor consent electives. Consistent with the program's emphasis on a liberal arts foundation, during the freshman and sophomore years, students will typically take courses in English, speech, political science, economics, math, sociology, psychology, western civilization, and the humanities. These courses will also fulfill general education requirements. Specific *prerequisites to be completed prior to admission to the BSW program include:

1. SWRK 101 with a minimum grade of "C"
2. ENG 100
3. PSY 100/PSYS 100 or PSY 220/PSYS 220
4. SOCL 100 or AGRI 108

5. DEI Course

Additional required courses for the BSW Program include:

1. PS 110
2. ECON 150 OR 202 or 203
3. Statistics (MATH 183, SWRK 344, SOCL 300, PSY/PSYS 313, OR PH 383)

These courses are encouraged to be taken prior to admission but will not prevent application for admission.

Complete application procedures and guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw/applicationprocedures.php>

Major requirements are as follows: SWRK 101, 301, 330, 345, 357, 375, 378, 379, 381, 395, 480/481, 482/483, two SWRK electives, and two Advisor-Consent electives which are courses at the 300-400 level (with some exceptions). These electives must be approved by the advisor.

Social Work Course Descriptions can be found in the [WKU Undergraduate Catalog](#).

Life or Work Experience

Consistent with the expectations of the Council on Social Work Education Board of Accreditation's Handbook of Accreditation Standards, 4.1 on Student Development, section 4.1.5 (2022, p. 26), the WKU BSW program does not grant academic credit for life or work experience.

Special Interest Opportunities for the Social Work Major

Child Welfare – Prepare, Retain, Engage, and Partner

CW PREP is an innovative workforce development program. The goal of CW PREP is profoundly simple – foster an unparalleled pathway for recruiting, supporting and retaining a vibrant, dynamic child welfare workforce. For further information regarding this opportunity, please contact the WKU CW PREP Site Coordinator, Dr. Monica Hines at (270) 745-2523 or monica.hines@wku.edu.

Directed Independent Study

The directed independent study option, SWRK 495 and SWRK 496, is available to students who (1) have attained junior standing and (2) have obtained instructor consent for an independent study. Independent study is available to the student who wishes to conduct individual, intensive reading and research in a specific area of social work, in close cooperation with supervising faculty. It may not be taken in lieu of, or as a substitute for, those courses which are specified in the curriculum as requirements. Students may enroll in a maximum of six credit hours of independent study; one to three hours of credit is available for SWRK 495 and 496.

Honors

Social Work students who are Honors students may augment any class in the Major. Students should work closely with the course instructor to develop a suitable Honors Augmentation project related to course content. For more information regarding WKU's Mahurin Honors College:

<https://www.wku.edu/honors/>

Eligibility for Field: SWRK 480/482 and SWRK 481/483

The field component of the social work curriculum is an experiential learning opportunity in which students apply conceptual and theoretical material to practice situations in agency settings. Field is taken during the senior year and consists of two linked experiences: the supervised practicum, SWRK 480 (3 credit hours) and SWRK 482 (3 credit hours), and the related seminars, SWRK 481 (3 credit hours) and SWRK 483 (3 credit hours). SWRK 480, Social Work Field Practicum I, and SWRK 481, Social Work Field Seminar I, are taken concurrently with SWRK 345 and SWRK 381. SWRK 482, Social Work Field Practicum II, and SWRK 483, Social Work Field Seminar II, are taken concurrently with SWRK 395 in the following semester. Students must successfully complete SWRK 480 and 481 in the same semester to continue in the Social Work Major. Students must successfully complete SWRK 482 and 483 in the same semester to continue in or complete the Social Work Major.

In preparation for the field, students are introduced to social service agencies and social work practice in the local community through field trips, agency interview assignments, guest speakers from the practice community, and throughout the advising process. Students are encouraged to consider employment and volunteer work in social service agencies.

The application process for field begins with the student submitting an application for field placement when the Field Director visits the designated social work class for field orientation during the semester preceding placement. It is the student's responsibility to contact the Field Director if they are absent during that session. The application is available from the Department of Social Work's Field Director. It is the responsibility of the student to take the initiative in obtaining and submitting this form. The Field Director will verify eligibility for field placement, which may include consultation with a student's academic advisor. Students may not enroll in SWRK 480, 481, 482, or 483 without senior status and completion of all social work pre-requisite courses.

Students receiving a "D" in any required social work course will not be allowed to enroll in the field courses until the deficiency has been corrected. All social work core courses and electives (including ACE electives) must be completed with a grade of "C" or higher.

It is the responsibility of the Field Director to provide field placement resources. Students are not to solicit placements on their own. Students are encouraged to suggest new field settings, keeping in mind the time required for approval, and that final responsibility for approval lies with the Field Director.

All field students must provide verification of individual professional liability insurance coverage in a minimum amount of \$1,000,000 occurrence/\$5,000,000 aggregate in effect during the time of field practicum. A student will not be allowed to begin participating in practicum at an agency until proof is submitted to the Director of Field Instruction and a contract agreement has been made between Western Kentucky University and the agency. A student must complete and earn a passing grade in all assigned pre-field work before being allowed to start their practicum.

Requirements for the Social Work Minor

Students wishing to minor in Social Work must complete 21 hours of Social Work courses, including the following:

- **SWRK 101: Foundations of Human Services**
- **SWRK 300: Diversity and Social Welfare**
 - **OR SWRK 395: Social Welfare and Policy Issues**
- **SWRK 301: Social Work Practice for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**
- **SWRK 330: Human Behavior in Social Environment I**
- **SWRK 357: Case Management**
- **SWRK Electives:** Two SWRK-prefix electives on different topics. Electives are typically offered each Fall, Spring, and Summer semester.

SWRK 101 must be completed before taking SWRK 301. Social work electives are typically taken any time after SWRK 101.

Practice courses and Field Practicum courses are not available to minors.

Students with questions about the minor may contact Dr. Whitney Harper, the social work minor advisor, at whitney.harper@wku.edu or they may contact the social work office at 270-745-4227.

*Please be aware that a minor in social work does not qualify the student as a professional social worker, as eligible for membership in the National Association of Social Workers, for licensure by the State of Kentucky, for advanced standing in a graduate school of social work, nor for social work practice in an employment situation.

Declaring the Social Work Major

When planning a program of study, each student should be aware of the University's academic requirements and regulations contained in the current catalog issue in the chapter entitled "Academic Information." Specific attention should be given to the subsections in the chapter entitled (1) Academic Programs, (2) General Education Requirements (known as Colonnade), and (3) Academic Requirements and Regulations.

Students who wish to major in social work typically begin as a social work pre-major (referred to as the Social Work Prep major), as full admission to the BSW program requires a formal application process. Social Work Prep majors may be first-year students, students changing from another major, students wishing to add social work as a double major, or students transferring from another institution. In some cases, transfer students will have already completed all requirements for the application to the BSW program and may be accepted into the BSW program concurrently with acceptance into WKU rather than starting as Social Work Prep majors. Students changing majors or transferring to WKU will have their previous course work applied toward their undergraduate degree program as appropriate (as determined by the Registrar's Office or the Transfer Center). This process will be documented on their degree audit located on TopNet.

For students wanting to pursue the social work major or minor, a Change of Major/Advisor Form should be completed on TopNet. *Students should work with their current academic advisor to complete this form.* Students should select "Social Work-Prep – Seeking Admission (594P)" as their new major and send the completed form to BSWadmissions@wku.edu.

While a Social Work Prep major, the student will work to complete the prerequisite courses for full admission into the BSW major. Upon completing the prerequisites and achieving a minimum 2.5

GPA, the student should submit their application to the BSW program. Applications for spring semester start are due November 1st and applications for fall semester start are due April 1st.

Students having questions about the program, majoring in social work, or changing their major to social work may email BSWAdmissions@WKU.edu for more information. Information sessions about the program will be held throughout the year and prospective students are encouraged to attend.

Academic Advising

The University Advising System

Please see the WKU Undergraduate Catalog for general information regarding academic advisement. The Advising and Career Development Center is located in DSU 2001 and 2141, and they can be contacted at (270) 745-5065. The university website address for ACDC is www.wku.edu/advising.

Advising in the BSW Program

Social Work Prep majors are advised through the ACDC or through a Regional Campus advisor, if that is their home campus.

After students complete the BSW admissions application, meet all admissions requirements, and are formally accepted into the Social Work Major (typically at the end of the sophomore year), they will be assigned to a Social Work faculty member who will serve as their primary advisor. Students should work closely with the advisor who assists in the selection of courses and will provide appropriate course suggestions for career objectives and to assure timely completion of degree program requirements. The University, as well as the BSW Program, requires students to meet each semester with the advisor in order to register for classes. In addition to academic planning, the advisor will assist in planning career directions within the profession of social work. When appropriate, the advisor can also refer the student to other University and community services.

If, for some reason, a student would like to change advisors, they will need to contact the BSW Program Director and explain their request. The BSW Program Director will consider making a new advisor assignment. If approved, the student will complete the Change of Major/Minor/Advisor form located on TopNet, indicating “yes” for change of advisor.

Admission and Retention Policies and Procedures

Admissions Procedures

See Appendices of this handbook for the section entitled, “Application Procedures.” The application process and forms are also available at the departmental website at www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw.

Students applying to and continuing in the BSW Program at Western Kentucky University are expected to possess, appreciate, and continue to develop the following qualities:

Self-awareness

Aspiring social workers must know themselves reasonably well and, on the whole, should like

themselves. The knowledge of their own personal strengths and weaknesses should allow them to focus on working effectively with others.

Professional commitment and behavior

Social work students should have a strong commitment to the goals of social welfare and to the ethical standards of the social work profession. They should work collaboratively with others to use professional knowledge, values, and skills to bring about the changes necessary for people to achieve their life goals more easily.

Knowledge as a base for practice skills

The activities of professional helpers must be grounded in relevant social, behavioral, and biological science knowledge. Helpers have to understand why people act as they do and the ways that behavior can be changed when that is desired.

Objectivity

Professional helpers must be able to recognize the worth and dignity of every human being. Objectivity involves being able to systematically evaluate people and their situations in an unbiased, factual way. Professional helpers must, at the same, time, be warm and caring toward those with whom they are working. Rejecting people because of their situations or creating barriers for those seeking help will destroy the helping process.

Empathy

Empathy is the ability to comprehend another's subjective reality and feelings. Empathy and support are necessary to enable the client to use both personal and outside resources, to develop and implement a solution to his/her problem, and to respond appropriately to client's needs.

Energy

Helping is an exhausting activity; not only does it require the careful use of knowledge and skill, but it is also a constant drain on feelings and emotions. Professional helpers must work on avoiding burnout by developing cooperative and facilitating interactions with colleagues and users of services (Federico, 1984, pp. 158-160).

Acceptance of diversity

Helping professionals must appreciate the value of human diversity. They must be willing to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance regardless of the person's race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and/or value system. Helpers must not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, political, and/or cultural values on their clients.

Ability to apply knowledge learned in the academic setting to practice situations

Since social workers must be able to function as practitioners, it is essential that they be able to demonstrate the ability to apply knowledge gained in coursework (e.g., ability to relate to others, assess problem situations, develop intervention plans and implement appropriate intervention strategies).

Freedom from chemical dependency or unresolved emotional issues

Since social workers must serve as healthy role models, they must be mentally healthy and free from chemical dependency problems. Admission to the BSW program is based on a minimum of one year in sobriety. If a student is currently in treatment for emotional problems, an independent

psychological evaluation and/or assessment by a recognized agency or professional may be required. The faculty will consider applicants on a case by case basis.

Transfer Students

Transfer courses from Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited programs are accepted when they satisfy BSW program requirements. Decisions regarding the acceptability of transfer work from other CSWE accredited programs are made by the BSW Program Director or by the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee if needed. Required social work courses taken at community or junior colleges may not be accepted as substitutes for upper-level courses at WKU. All transfer students will be required to follow stated admissions requirements. Students transferring from community colleges within Kentucky will follow the articulation agreement formulated between the community colleges and the four-year institutions. The Office of Admissions completes transfer evaluations on all incoming transfer students. The BSW Program follows these recommendations in terms of general education requirements, however, the Office of Admissions defers to the BSW Program when making decisions regarding transfer courses for the Major.

Students wishing to substitute a required social work course must verify that the course complies with the following criteria:

1. A course that the student wishes to substitute for a required social work course must have social work content.
2. The course to be substituted must have been taken in an accredited BSW program and the student must have received at least a grade of "C" in the course.
3. The course must have been taken within six (6) years from the date the request is made to substitute it for a required social work course.
4. The student should be prepared to provide the course syllabus and other supportive material to the BSW Program Director.
5. If the Program Director needs to consult with the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee, the committee will make the decision about approving the substitution in collaboration with the Program Director.
6. The course must have been taught by an instructor or professor holding an MSW or DSW degree.

Every effort will be made by the BSW Program Director and/or the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee to ensure that students avoid redundancy when transferring, while at the same time maintaining the curricular integrity of the BSW program.

The general policy of the BSW program is to not accept transfer credit from non-accredited social work programs, however, students can complete a Student Exception Form (see Appendix in this Student Handbook) requesting an exception by the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee. The steps outlined above should be followed. The student would be expected to provide comprehensive written materials to document the content of the course(s). In addition to, or in lieu of, the comprehensive written materials, oral proficiency exams may be utilized by the Admissions and Retention Committee for any student seeking to transfer in required social work courses.

Exception Policy/Procedure

The admission process to the WKU BSW program has several requirements, including completion

of prerequisite courses prior to admission. In addition, the program's structured sequencing of courses is designed to meet the accreditation guidelines of the CSWE. Exceptions to these procedures are extremely rare; however, occasionally a student presents a situation that requires flexibility in serving the student's best interest but does not jeopardize the integrity of the BSW program's policies and procedures. In these cases, a student can request an exception. The Student Exception Form can be found in the Appendix of this Student Handbook. This form is filed with the student's advisor and the request is considered by the Admission and Retention Committee.

Admissions Committee

The BSW Program Director makes the admission decision except in cases where consultation is needed due to extenuating circumstances. Then the committee is called to collaboratively make the admission decision. The committee shall include the Program Director, the Field Director, and two social work faculty members.

Levels of Acceptance

Acceptance: The student has successfully completed all prerequisite courses, has achieved at least the sophomore status, and has a cumulative GPA of 2.50 or higher. The student has also consulted with the BSW Program Director or other Social Work faculty member to discuss their application to the Social Work Major, and has submitted the appropriate materials, including an application, essay, Code of Ethics Agreement, and Student Handbook Agreement Statement. As needed, these materials may have been submitted by the Program Director to the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee for further review and acceptance.

Non-acceptance: One or more of the criteria for admission to the BSW program have not been met. The BSW Program Director will notify the student in writing of the Committee's decision.

Deferral: In some cases, a student may be granted a deferral if they are currently enrolled in prerequisite courses that will be completed prior to the semester for which they are seeking admission, or if their GPA is below the admission criteria but they are enrolled in courses that will bring them up to the required standard before the start of the requested semester. For example, a student enrolled in a summer prerequisite course **may** be admitted for fall start if they successfully complete the course and submit documentation before the fall semester begins. If the student does not successfully complete or submit documentation of the requirements for admission prior to the deadline set by the Program Director, their application status will be moved non-acceptance although they may be considered for admission acceptance in subsequent terms.

Continued Retention in the Social Work Program

Students receiving a grade of "D" or lower in any course used for the Social Work Major will be required to repeat the course.

Should a student need to repeat a course, they may not be able to proceed in the Major until the course is passed. Because the courses must be completed in sequence and are only offered in the semesters listed, this may mean that a student must sit out of some of the required courses for a semester. This could potentially delay a student completing the Major by an academic year.

Any student who fails to enroll in or complete required social work courses which advance them toward completion of the BSW degree for two or more consecutive semesters, must apply for

readmission before continuing the program. Students removed from the program for this reason may be reassigned to a general ACDC student advisor. If a student is required to reapply to the BSW program, they need to provide a detailed plan outlining their readiness to return and strategies they will use to ensure their success when they return. The plan should address the obstacles that prevented the student's earlier completion of the program. If requested, documentation from a Qualified Mental Health Provider (QMHP) indicating their assessment of the feasibility of the plan may be required.

Continued retention is contingent upon upholding the principles of the NASW Code of Ethics, being able to demonstrate an understanding of social work knowledge, values, and skills; and, if applicable, completing any recommendations generated by the student's advisor and/or the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee.

Student Concerns Process

The NASW Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) is a guiding framework and source for identifying professional performance expectations. Students are expected to practice in an ethical manner while in the classroom, when completing course assignments, and while at their field placement in accordance with the BSW Student Handbook, WKU Student Code of Conduct and the NASW Code of Ethics. Student behaviors that fail to meet these expectations will be documented in a Professional Concerns Form (see Appendix in this Handbook), will be referred to the BSW Program Director; and, if necessary, referred to the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee.

A Student Concerns Process may be initiated in response to any of the following student behaviors:

1. Overtly expressed attitudes and values in opposition to those found in the NASW Code of Ethics.
2. Evidence of chemical use or dependency that may impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients.
3. Mental/emotional difficulties which impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients.
4. Evidence of criminal activity occurring during enrollment or prior to enrollment and becoming known after enrollment.
5. Unresolved personal issues which impair performance, interactions, and relationships with classmates, faculty, agency staff, and/or clients.
6. Academic cheating, lying, or plagiarism in any social work course, including field courses.
7. Failure to meet the guidelines outlined in this handbook and as outlined in the notification of admission into the Major.

A faculty member may initiate this process by completing the Professional Concerns Form (located in the Appendix of this Handbook) and providing copies of all pertinent documentation concerning the issue(s) of focus as applicable (i.e., emails, notes, etc.).

If the student concern is related to performance in practicum, the process will follow the protocol set forth in the BSW Field Manual (see Notification of Student Concerns).

If the student concern relates to general performance or performance in any class *other than practicum classes*, the process will be:

1. The Professional Concerns Form and relevant materials will be submitted to the BSW Program Director and the student's advisor.
2. The advisor will then meet with the identified student within 10 business days to review the stated concerns.
3. The student will receive a copy of the Professional Concerns Form and relevant materials at the meeting with the advisor, and a copy of these documents will be placed in the student's permanent record.
4. The meeting with the student may have **one or both** of the following outcomes:
 - a. A plan of action to address the identified concern(s) in the form of a *Student Success Plan* which:
 - Will be written by the advisor in consultation with the student
 - May include consultation with other Department faculty
 - Will include a timeline for the accomplishment of this plan
 - Will be submitted to the BSW Program Director and a copy provided to the student within five (5) business days
 - b. A referral to the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee for further review

If the recommendation is to refer the concern(s) to the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee, the committee will review all relevant documentation and may request to meet with the student to discuss the concern(s). **If a meeting is requested, it should occur within 5 business days of the referral to the committee.**

If the student is requested to meet with the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee, the student may also invite a (willing) faculty member to serve as her or his advocate. This will usually be the student's advisor, but the student may choose another WKU faculty member. No personnel outside of the university may attend the meeting. The Field Director must be present if the professional concern is related to a student's field placement. **If the student fails to comply with the request to meet with the Admissions and Retention Committee, the process to terminate the student's enrollment in the program may be initiated.**

During the meeting, the student will present her or his understanding regarding the cause(s) and effect(s) of the identified professional concern(s) and propose her or his plan of action to address the identified professional concern(s). In addition, the student should be prepared to answer committee members' questions regarding the concern(s) and the proposed plan.

After meeting with the student, the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee members will consider the student's comments before conducting a vote to determine one of the following outcomes (the decision will be based on a majority vote with the BSW Program Director casting a tie-breaking vote if needed):

1. A Student Success Plan (if one was not already created with the advisor) or a revision of the original plan
2. Referral to initiate the termination process (as described in the next section).

The student will be informed of the decision in writing by the BSW Program Director or the student's faculty advisor within five (5) business days. A copy of the committee's decision will be placed in the student's permanent file.

If a Student Success Plan is recommended, the student will schedule a meeting within five (5) business days with her or his advisor to develop or finalize the plan outlined by the BSW Admissions and Retention committee.

A subsequent meeting with the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee may be scheduled to determine if the student is making sufficient progress toward accomplishing steps outlined in the plan. The committee may re-negotiate and/or revise the Student Success Plan as needed or recommend termination at that time.

If the student is not in agreement with the actions of the BSW Program Director, her or his advisor, or the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee, the student may elect to pursue the Grievance Procedure outlined below.

Termination Policies and Procedures

The Western Kentucky University BSW Program is a professional program accredited by CSWE. As such, the program is designed to ensure that those individuals who graduate from the program meet the requirements of an entry-level professional social worker and are competent to provide quality services to future clients.

Termination from the BSW Program

Students may be terminated from the WKU BSW Program if, in the professional judgment of the BSW faculty, violations of academic, professional, and/or ethical codes have occurred and that the student's performance is indicative of non-compatibility with the profession of social work. This may include a student's failure to satisfactorily follow through on the Student Success Plan as detailed above, and/or violations of the Professional Concerns outlined previously.

However, since the advisement process within the BSW Program includes ongoing evaluation of the student's professional potential and progress, use of this termination process is expected to be rare.

Termination Process

The program has the following termination protocol in place. The Termination Process includes the following steps:

1. The BSW Program Director will inform the student in writing regarding the decision to terminate the student from the BSW program within five (5) business days. A copy of this document will be placed in the student's permanent file.
2. If requested, the BSW Program Director will meet with the student and her or his advisor to review the policy and procedure of termination to ensure the student understands both the process and her/his right to appeal.
3. The student has ten(10) business days following written notification of termination in which to appeal the decision to the Department Chair. (See Grievance Procedure in this

manual). If the student does not appeal the decision in writing to the Department Chair, she or he is considered terminated from the BSW program.

4. If no appeal is made, the BSW Program Director will notify the Registrar's Office of the dismissal.

In some cases, a student who is terminated from the BSW program may reapply for admission at a later date, provided there is clear evidence that the professional concern(s) under question has/have been adequately addressed. The decision to readmit a previously terminated student is made by the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee.

Under the most extreme circumstances, the Professional Concerns and Termination Processes outlined above will be bypassed when the identified professional concern reflects a significant breach of professional conduct incompatible with the social work profession. In these cases, immediate termination from the BSW program will be recommended to the Department Chair by the BSW Program Director in consultation with the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee. Some circumstances may also require that the student be reported to the WKU Office of Student Conduct.

Grievance Procedure

Every precaution will be taken to protect students' rights. If the student does not concur with the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee decision, a written appeal may be made per the ordered sequence described here:

1. **Department of Social Work**

- a. The student will submit a BSW Program Student Grievance Form to the Social Work Department Chair (See Appendix for BSW Program Student Grievance Form) within ten (10) business days following receipt of the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee's written decision.
- b. Within ten (10) business days following receipt of the written appeal, the Social Work Department Chair will respond in writing indicating whether she or he supports the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee's decision.

2. **CHHS Office of the Dean**

- a. If a student wishes to appeal the Department Chair's decision, she or he must contact the CHHS Office of the Dean to determine the CHHS appeal procedure.

3. **University**

- a. If a student wishes to appeal the CHHS Office of the Dean's decision, she or he must contact a Student Ombuds Officer at 270-745-8985 or student.ombudsman@wku.edu to determine next steps.

A student will receive written notification at each level of the grievance process. The student can contact her or his faculty advisor, BSW Program Director, or the Department Chair to clarify the steps of the process. A grievance may be withdrawn by the student at any point during the process outlined above.

Student Complaint Procedure

Faculty Member

Complaints regarding a faculty member (including course grade appeals) should follow the Student Complaint Procedure as outlined here: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php>

This process should begin with the student meeting and attempting to resolve the issue with the faculty member. An unresolved complaint with a faculty member should be processed with the BSW Program Director and if that does not achieve resolution, the BSW Program Director will refer the matter to the Department Chair. .

Other Complaints

Other types of complaints (i.e., denial of accommodations, discrimination and harassment) should follow the Student Complaint Procedure - *Important Complaint Exceptions* as outlined here: <https://www.wku.edu/handbook/academic-complaint.php>

Faculty and Staff in the BSW Program

Department Chair:

Grace Lartey, PhD, Professor

BSW Program Director:

Whitney Cassity-Caywood, PhD, LCSW, Assistant Professor

Field Director:

Kellye McIntyre, MSW: Instructor

BSW Faculty:

Jay Gabbard, PhD, MSW: Professor. Advisor for Phi Alpha Honor Society

Gayle Mallinger, PhD, MSW: Professor. S.T.A.I.R. Certificate Coordinator

Whitney Harper, PhD, MSW: Associate Professor. Social Work Minor Coordinator, Substance Use Disorders Professional Certificate Coordinator

Monica Hines, EdD, MSW: Assistant Professor. Advisor for Social Work Student Union

Tanya Burgess, PhD, LMSW: Assistant Professor.

Staff:

Michelle Schneller, Budget and Office Coordinator

Bailey Cooke, BSW/MSW Office Associate

Student Organizations, Governance, and Departmental Awards

Social Work Student Union (SWSU)/Graduate Student Social Workers (GSSW)

Purpose:

The Social Work Student Union (SWSU) at Western Kentucky University serves for the betterment, education, and representation of themselves while gaining practical experience and providing service to the community. Membership to SWSU offers the opportunity to enhance student careers through peer recognition and to continue education through practical experience. SWSU is committed to conducting professional relationships in accordance with the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics and comply with the standards set forth by Western Kentucky University to maintain registered status.

Membership in SWSU is available to all students majoring (including pre-majors), minoring in social work and graduate SW students. Membership applications are available on the Social Work bulletin board on second floor of Academic Complex, on SWSU's webpage, or by contacting the SWSU President or faculty sponsor.

Student Governance

The Social Work Student Union (SWSU) at Western Kentucky University elects student ambassadors at each campus. SWSU ambassadors are invited to attend BSW program and departmental level meetings, and provide input into decision-making, as well as policies and procedures that are being developed.

The Social Work Department also has a Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC). The DAC meets a minimum of twice an academic year, and is an opportunity for students, graduates, and

community partners to provide comprehensive feedback to the WKU Department of Social Work for program improvement. The DAC is comprised of three subcommittees: BSW, MSW, and Field. BSW faculty nominate Social Work Major students for membership on the DAC to serve on the BSW and field sub-committees.

National Association of Social Workers

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW serves 150,000 social workers worldwide. NASW was formed in 1955 through a merger of seven predecessor social work organizations. According to the NASW, “NASW’s primary functions include promoting the professional development of its members, establishing and maintaining professional standards of practice, advancing sound social policies, and providing services that protect its members and enhance their professional status” (<https://www.socialworkers.org/>).

BSW students are encouraged to join NASW and participate in local branch meetings.

Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW) of Southern Kentucky

A branch of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW), ABSW’s membership includes both students and community member mentors. ABSW provides year-round service and advocacy is particularly focused on the Black/African American community. Service projects have included afterschool programs with the local housing authority, the community Kwanzaa celebration, and a variety of campus and community events during Black History Month. Both undergraduate and graduate Social Work students are encouraged to join. ABSW was established at Western Kentucky University in 2010. (<https://www.nabsw.org/>)

Phi Alpha Honor Society

Phi Alpha is a national honor society for social work students. The purposes of Phi Alpha Honor Society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. In addition to recognizing excellence, the chapter will carry out one service project per academic year to give back to the community. The Delta Mu Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society was established at Western Kentucky University in 1994.

Purpose:

To provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work.

An undergraduate student is eligible for membership after achieving the following national and local chapter requirements.

1. Declared Social Work as a Major
2. Achieved sophomore status
3. Accepted in the BSW program at WKU
4. Completed 9 semester hours in Social Work courses
5. Achieved an overall grade point average of 3.30 (on a 4.0 scale)
6. Achieved a 3.25 grade point average in required social work courses

There is an initiation fee of \$40 which covers the lifetime membership dues and an honor cord for graduation. Application forms are available in the Social Work Administrative Office (AC 110), or from Phi Alpha officers or Dr. Jay Gabbard, faculty sponsor.

BSW Awards

The BSW Program recognizes student's accomplishments by identifying outstanding seniors for recognition as award recipients. Students who are selected for the BSW Program's awards are recognized at an annual BSW Program graduation ceremony.

- The ***Outstanding BSW Student*** award is presented to one senior student from each of WKU's campuses that offer the BSW degree. This award is based on a demonstration of academic performance, professional commitment, community engagement, and professional relationships with faculty and peers.
- The ***Outstanding BSW Field Student*** award is presented to the senior or recent graduate whose field performance is exemplary and demonstrates outstanding service to clients and agency.
- The ***BSW Research Award*** is presented to one senior student that has demonstrated scholarship advancing scientific inquiry in social work or social welfare. The research should serve as a model of scientific rigor and show high potential to impact social work practice, policy, or research. The criteria can include a component of a manuscript, a research poster, or presentation.

APPENDICES

Dear Prospective WKU Social Work student,

Thank you for your interest in Social Work at Western Kentucky University!

We offer an accredited baccalaureate degree in Social Work (BSW). The degree is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

Social work is a rigorous program of study in the areas of human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field experience. The program also emphasizes social work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, and populations-at-risk. Courses are sequenced with certain areas of study mastered before proceeding to others.

Prerequisite courses for admission to the program are: 1) SWRK 101; 2) ENG 100; 3) PSY/S 100 OR 220; 4) SOCL 100 OR AGRI 108; and 5) DEI course. Other additional required courses for the major are: PS 110, ECON 150 OR 202 OR 203, and a statistics course (MATH 183, SWRK 344, SOCL 300, PSY/PSYS 313, OR PH 383). These courses are encouraged to be taken prior to the start of the BSW program.

Consideration for acceptance into the program requires that students successfully complete the prerequisite courses, have an overall grade point average of at least 2.50 at the time of application, submit an application and essay, agree to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics, agree to abide by the BSW Student Handbook, and attain sophomore standing at the time of admission to the program. An interview with the BSW Program Director and/or Field Director may also be required.

All application materials must be submitted via the online process no later than November 1st for students seeking admission for the Spring Semester and no later than April 1st for students seeking admission for the Fall Semester. Following admission to the Program, Spring-start students will complete the major in five semesters while Fall-start students will complete the Major in four semesters.

Let us know if there are further questions. We look forward to hearing from you if our program meets your career interests and academic needs.

Sincerely,

BSW Program Director

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

1. Apply for admission to Western Kentucky University. Application information can be found at <https://www.wku.edu/admissions/>. The Office of Admissions can also be emailed at the following address: admission@wku.edu. The following is the address for the Office of Admissions: Western Kentucky University, Office of Admissions, 1906 College Heights

Blvd. #11020, Bowling Green, KY 42101-1020, (270) 745-2551.

2. The BSW program has an additional, separate application from the WKU application. The BSW application is generally submitted in the sophomore year (information below). Before full admission to the BSW program, students may declare themselves a Social Work Pre-Major (594P). This may be done upon entering WKU as a student or by completing a Change of Major/Minor form on TopNet with the assistance of their primary advisor. The advisor should forward the form to the BSWadmissions@wku.edu for processing. Students located on WKU regional campuses should work with the WKU advisor located on their campus who will then forward it to the department. The form will be reviewed and (if approved) forwarded to the Academic and Career Development Center for processing.
3. Complete the following prerequisite courses: 1) SWRK 101; 2) ENG 100; 3) PSY/PSYS 100 OR 220; 4) SOCL 100 or AGRI 108; and 5) DEI course. Additional required courses are encouraged to be taken prior to admission to the program. Those courses are PS 110, ECON 150 OR 202 OR 203, and a statistics course (MATH 183, SWRK 344, SOCL 300, PSY/PSYS 313, OR PH 383).
4. Students must have a GPA of at least 2.50 at time of application and be at least a sophomore (have completed 30 hrs.) in order to be admitted to the BSW program.
5. Apply to the BSW Program. BSW application materials can be found at the following link: <https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw/applicationprocedures.php>

All application materials should be received, **no later than** the dates listed below:

- **November 1:** Deadline for students wishing to begin the major in the following Spring semester. *(These students will complete the Major in five semesters: Spring + Fall + Spring + Fall + Spring.)*
 - **April 1:** Priority deadline for students wishing to begin the major in the following Fall semester. *(These students will complete the Major in four semesters: Fall + Spring + Fall + Spring.)*
6. Read the NASW Code of Ethics and electronically sign the Agreement Form, which is located in the BSW Admission Packet. The Code can be found at the following link: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
 7. Read the WKU BSW Student Handbook and electronically sign the Agreement Form, which is located in the BSW Admission Packet.
 8. A screening interview may be requested by the BSW Program Director.
 9. The application may be presented to the BSW Admissions and Retention Committee for review and a final decision on acceptance as a Social Work Major in the BSW Program.
 10. The BSW Program Director will notify students regarding the admissions decision.

Step 1	Review the BSW Program Overview Presentation
Step 2	Read the Most Recent BSW Student Handbook
Step 3	Read the NASW Code of Ethics
Step 4	Write a Personal/Professional Statement
Step 5	Access Academic Transcript
Step 6	Complete the Online Application Upload Personal/Professional Statement For Transfer Students: Unofficial copy of most recent transcript that includes any courses in progress <i>Upload other relevant materials as needed (e.g., resume, explanation re: criminal charges [if applicable]*)</i>

BSW Student Handbook Agreement

The WKU BSW Student Handbook can be reviewed and/or printed from the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW)'s Homepage:

1. <http://www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw>
2. Click on BSW Admissions
3. Click on BSW Student Handbook

The Departmental and BSW Office Coordinator also has a few copies of the BSW Student Handbook on file. You can check out a copy from the Departmental and BSW Office Coordinator for your review.

_____ I have **reviewed and understand** the WKU BSW Student Handbook.

_____ I understand that **I am expected to follow** the policies and procedures of the WKU BSW Student Handbook.

_____ I **recognize that failure to follow** the policies and procedures set forth in the WKU BSW Student Handbook may affect my standing in the program.

(Name – Print)

(Signature)

(Date)

Code of Ethics Agreement

Please read the National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics. You can review it online at the following address:

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Once you have accessed the NASW homepage, review all of the following sections of the Code of Ethics: Preamble, Purpose, Ethical Principles, and the Ethical Standards to Clients, to Colleagues, in Practice Settings, as Professionals, to the Profession, and to the Broader Society.

The Departmental and BSW Office Coordinator also has a few copies of the Code of Ethics on file. You can check out a copy for your review.

_____ I have **reviewed and understand** the NASW Code of Ethics.

_____ I **agree with, support, and commit myself** to uphold the principles contained within the NASW Code of Ethics.

_____ I **understand** that any violation of the principles contained within the NASW Code of Ethics can result in my removal from the Social Work Major.

(Name – Print)

(Signature)

(Date)

BSW PROGRAM STUDENT EXCEPTION FORM

Student's Name _____

Student's WKU # _____

Date Exception Filed _____

Describe Exception: (use additional sheets of paper if necessary or insert below)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Action taken by the Admissions and Retention Committee:

Student's Advisor/Date _____

Program Director/Date _____

BSW PROGRAM STUDENT GRIEVANCE FORM

Student's Name _____

Student's WKU # _____

Date Grievance Filed _____

Describe Grievance: (use additional sheets of paper if necessary or insert below)

[illegible]

Action taken by the Program and/or Departmental Level:

Student's Advisor/Date _____

Department Head/Date _____
(if needed)

WKU BSW PROGRAM PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS FORM AND PROCESS

Date: _____

Student

Name: _____ Student ID (800) number: _____

Reporting Party

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Student's Advisor

Name: _____

Student Concern (please attach documentation)

Advisor Recommendation:

_____ **No Action**
_____ **Student Success Plan** (please attach plan) **and Refer to BSW Admissions and Retention Committee**

Advisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date received by BSW Program Director: _____

BSW Program Director Signature: _____ Date: _____


BSW Admissions and Retention Committee Recommendation:

_____ **No Action**
_____ **Update Student Success Plan** (please attach updated plan)
_____ **Termination** (please attach rationale)

BSW Program Director Signature: _____ Date: _____

Date recommendation sent to student: _____

(If applicable) Date Termination recommendation sent to Department Chair: _____

	BACHELOR of SOCIAL WORK (#594) Department of Social Work College of Health and Human Services Western Kentucky University
	The suggested program of study shown below should be used in consultation with your advisor(s). Every student will finish with a unique plan of his/her own depending on the electives selected. Prerequisites, Course Numbers, and Course Titles are subject to change.

SAMPLE – Finish in Four Plan

FIRST YEAR			
Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
*SWRK 101 – Foundations of Human Services (E-SB)	3	Minor/Elective	3
HIST 101 – World History I OR HIST 102 – World History II (F-SB)	3	*ENG 100 – Intro College Writing (F-W1)	3
COMM 145 Fundamentals of Public Speaking & Communication (F-OC)	3	Colonnade – Natural & Physical Sciences or World Language (if needed)	3
*SOCL 100 – Intro to Sociology OR AGRI 108 – Rural Sociology (E-SB)	3	PS 110 – American National Government (E-SB)	3
*PSY/S 100 – Intro to Psychology OR PSY/S 220 – Lifespan Developmental Psychology (E-SB)	3	Colonnade – Arts & Humanities	3-4
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15	TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15-16

SECOND YEAR			
<i>Apply to Social Work Major this year. See https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/bsw/ for application deadlines.</i>			
Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
ECON 150 – Intro to Economics OR ECON 202 – Microeconomics OR ECON 203 – Macroeconomics (E-SB)	3	Natural & Physical Science (E-NS/SL)	3
MATH 183, SWRK 344, SOCL 300, PSY 313, PSYS 313, or PH 383	3	Connections: Social & Cultural (K-SC)	3
Major Social Work Elective #1	3	*DEI Course	3
ENG 200 – Intro to Literature (F-AH)	3	Minor/Elective	3
Minor/Elective	3	Minor/Elective	3
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15	TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15

For more details and courses offered in the Colonnade General Education program visit the [website](#).

World Language Requirement: Language Proficiency of novice-high before completing 60 credit hours is required (or completion of 2nd level of a language). Two credits (or equivalent) of a single world language in High School satisfies this WKU requirement.

THIRD YEAR			
Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
SWRK 301 – Social Work Practice for Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion	3	SWRK 357 – Case Management	3
SWRK 330 – Human Behavior & the Social Environment I (Connections: Systems[K-SY])	3	SWRK 378 – Social Work Practice II	3
SWRK 375 – Social Work Practice I	3	SWRK 379 – Intro to Social Work Communication Skills	3
Connections: Local to Global (K-LG)	3	ENG 300 – Writing in the Disciplines OR COMM 200 – Foundations of Communication (F-W2)	3
Minor/Elective	3	Minor/Elective	3
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15	TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15

FOURTH YEAR			
Fall Semester		Spring Semester	
SWRK 345 – Social Work Research Methods	3	SWRK 395 – Social Welfare Policy & Issues	3
SWRK 381 – Social Work Practice III	3	SWRK 482 – Social Work Field Practicum II	3
SWRK 480 – Social Work Field Practicum I	3	SWRK 483 – Social Work Field Seminar II	3
SWRK 481 – Social Work Field Seminar I	3	Major Social Work Elective #2	3
Minor/Elective	3	Minor/Elective	3
TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15	TOTAL CREDIT HOURS	15

Total Credit Hours: 120

* Denotes prerequisite course before admission

Students must achieve a “C” or better in each Social Work course in the major.

For More Information:

Department: Social Work

Website: <https://www.wku.edu/socialwork/>

Phone: (270) 745-5312

Email: swrk@wku.edu

Course Descriptions: <https://www.wku.edu/undergraduatecatalog/>

<p style="text-align: center;">Colonnade Program</p> <p>Includes courses in communication, humanities, social & behavioral sciences, natural sciences, world culture, and health/wellness.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Foundations</u></p> <p><u>College Composition (3)(WC)</u> <i>*Students with English ACT score ≥ 29 or an SAT score ≥ 650 will receive credit for this requirement.</i> _____ (3) *ENG 100 Introduction to College Writing</p> <p><u>Writing in the Disciplines (3)(WC)</u> ENG 300, or 200-level or higher writing in the discipline course _____ (3) _____</p> <p><u>Human Communication (3)(OC)</u> _____ (3) COMM 145 Fundamentals of Public Speaking</p> <p><u>Quantitative Reasoning (3)(QR)</u> <i>*Students with a Math ACT ≥ 26 or an SAT score ≥ 600 will receive credit for MATH 116.</i> _____ (3) _____ MATH 183 recommended</p> <p><u>Literary Studies (3)(AH)</u> _____ (3) ENG 200 Introduction to Literature</p> <p><u>World History (3)(SB)</u> _____ (3) HIST 101 World History I OR _____ (3) HIST 102 World History II</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Explorations</u></p> <p><u>Arts & Humanities (3)(AH)</u> _____ (3) _____</p> <p><u>Social & Behavioral Sciences (3)(SB)</u> _____ (3) *PSY/S 100 Introduction to Psychology OR _____ (3) * PSY/S 220 Life Span Developmental Psychology</p> <p><u>Natural & Physical Sciences (6)(NS)</u> <i>*Minimum of 6 hours, including one course with an essential/lab component. Courses must be taken from 2 different disciplines.</i> _____ (3) _____ _____ (3) _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Connections</u></p> <p><i>*Students should complete 21 hours (in Foundations/Explorations courses) or have junior status before enrolling, since content builds on Explorations and Foundations courses. Complete 9 hours and courses must be from 3 separate disciplines.</i></p> <p><u>Social & Cultural (3)</u> _____ (3) _____</p> <p><u>Local to Global (3)</u> _____ (3) _____</p> <p><u>Systems (3)</u> _____ (3) _____</p> <p><u>International Experience (3)</u> _____ (3) _____</p> <p>Language Proficiency of novice-high must be earned before completing 60 credit hours. Two credits (or equivalent) of High School language in a single world language satisfies the WKU Proficiency requirement.</p> <p>_____ Foreign Language Proficiency</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Work</p> <p>Requirements for Seeking Admission: Completion of SWRK 101 which requires a grade of “C” or better, ENG 100, PSY/S 100/220, SOCL 100/AGRI 108, DEI course and a GPA of at least 2.5. Formal application is required, see website or consult with an advisor for further information.* Denotes prerequisite courses for admission to the program.</p> <p>Course Prerequisites are in parentheses after each course listing.</p> <p><u>Additional prerequisite courses:</u> (6 hours) _____ (3) *SOCL 100 Introduction to Sociology OR _____ (3) *AGRI 108 Rural Sociology _____ (3) *DEI course</p> <p><u>Other additional required courses:</u> (9 hours) _____ (3) *PS 110 American National Government _____ (3) *ECON 150 Introduction to Economics OR _____ (3) *ECON 202 Microeconomics OR _____ (3) *ECON 203 Macroeconomics _____ (3) *SWRK 344 Social Work Statistics OR _____ (3) *MATH 183 Introductory Statistics OR _____ (3) *SOCL 300 Using Statistics in Sociology OR _____ (3) *PH 383 Biostatistics in Health Sciences OR _____ (3) *PSY/S 313 Statistics in Psychology</p> <p><u>Required Major Courses:</u> (54 hours) _____ (3) *SWRK 101 Foundations of Human Services _____ (3) SWRK 301 Social Work Practice for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (SWRK 101, restricted to Majors and Minors) _____ (3) SWRK 330 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (None) _____ (3) SWRK 345 Social Work Research Methods (SWRK 378, 379) _____ (3) SWRK 357 Case Management (None) _____ (3) SWRK 375 Social Work Practice I (SWRK 330, restricted to social work majors. Corequisite: OR SWRK 330) _____ (3) SWRK 378 Social Work Practice II (SWRK 330, 375) _____ (3) SWRK 379 Introduction to Social Work Communication Skills (SWRK 330, 375) _____ (3) SWRK 381 Social Work Practice III (SWRK 378, 379) _____ (3) SWRK 395 Social Welfare Policy & Issues (SWRK 345, 381) _____ (3) SWRK 480 Social Work Field Practicum I (SWRK 378, 379, Field Director approval, and senior standing. Corequisite: SWRK 481) _____ (3) SWRK 481 Social Work Field Seminar I (SWRK 378, 379, admission to field internship, senior standing. Corequisite: SWRK 480) _____ (3) SWRK 482 Social Work Field Practicum II (SWRK 480/481. Corequisite: SWRK 483) _____ (3) SWRK 483 Social Work Field Seminar II (SWRK 480/481. Corequisite: SWRK 482) _____ (3) SWRK Elective _____ _____ (3) SWRK Elective _____ _____ (3) Advisor Consent Elective _____ _____ (3) Advisor Consent Elective _____</p> <p><u>Minor and/or Open Electives:</u> (17-18 hours) TOTAL HOURS 120</p>
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