



# Social Work

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO  
**COLORADO SPRINGS**  
**Master of Social Work**  
**Student Handbook**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## **Purpose of the MSW Student Handbook**

Welcome to the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) College of Public Service! This handbook will acquaint you with the policies and procedures of the MSW program at the College of Public Service (CPS). The content is designed to facilitate your progress toward applying for the program and successfully earning the MSW. Please read this handbook carefully and consult your faculty advisor with any questions. It is the student's responsibility to be familiar with the MSW, CPS, and UCCS Academic Policies. All students are bound by these requirements as stated in the UCCS Academic Catalog and expanded upon in this handbook.

Please be aware that the policies and procedures described here are subject to change and can be affected by changes in the policies of UCCS and the Graduate School. Check the [Academic Catalog](#) and [Social Work](#) website for the most up-to-date information.

## **The College of Public Service**

The UCCS MSW program is housed within the College of Public Service (formerly the School of Public Affairs), which is a dynamic learning community serving those who seek to make a difference in the public sector. Degrees offered by the College of Public Service include the Bachelor of Social Work, Master of Social Work, Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice, Master of Criminal Justice, and Master of Public Administration. Our programs emphasize critical thinking and analytical skills necessary for leading and managing effectively in a diverse society. Our graduates are prepared to innovate in the complex world in which we live.

CPS students can also pursue a more limited course of study, earning an undergraduate certificate in Homeland Security or a graduate certificate in Public Management; Nonprofit Management; Criminal Justice; Homeland Security and Emergency Management Leadership; National Security Intelligence; or Grant Writing, Management, and Program Evaluation. Many of these may be earned in conjunction with the degree.

The CPS faculty and staff believes every one of our stakeholders (students, faculty, staff, alumni, the CU system and communities throughout Southern Colorado and beyond) can play a part in transforming our world. Our stakeholders bring their passions, goals, and eagerness to engage. We provide a collaborative environment and an extraordinary combination of rigorous academics, relevant research, practical application, and partnership networks that create the knowledge, skills, experience, and connections needed to create significant impact.

A unique balance of theory and real-world application is delivered not only through curriculum and class interaction. It is also represented by the make-up of carefully chosen faculty and staff as well as through CPS partnerships to stay on the cutting edge of the industries for which it supplies leaders. CPS takes an integrated approach, connecting all its programs under the Public Services umbrella



including public administration and public service, public finance, public and nonprofit management, social and public policy, criminology and criminal justice, ethics and leadership, and homeland security and defense. With the addition of Social Work, we also provide quality graduate and undergraduate social work education.

Together, the CPS disciplines are poised to deliver knowledge, research, and leaders ready and able to create significant impacts that ensure a resilient community and world. Social Work is proud to be included under the CPS umbrella.

### **College of Public Service Mission Statement**

The mission of the UCCS College of Public Service is to improve the quality of life for people and their communities, here and abroad, through collaborative governance, public service innovation, community engagement, and research.

To accomplish this mission, we strive to

- Improve the quality of public, nonprofit, criminal justice, and national security systems.
- Educate leaders to meet societal challenges with compassion, vision, analytic rigor, and practicality.
- Foster critical thinking and decision-making, effective and confident communication, creative problem-solving, knowledge management, and global citizenship.
- Create, build, and maintain connections with current, past and future students and all the communities we serve.
- Ground our decisions and actions in integrity, diversity, collaboration, and excellence.
- Support and model civil public discourse, citizenship, responsibility, and respect.

### **UCCS Department of Social Work Mission Statement**

Within the context of the UCCS and CPS mission, the mission of the Department of Social Work at UCCS is to transmit, develop, critically examine, and apply knowledge and practice skills to advance social work practice and social welfare policy in order to promote social, cultural and economic justice for the betterment of poor, vulnerable, and oppressed individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, and society. The mission of UCCS Department of Social Work is undertaken with a commitment to social work's professional code of ethics and the values of the profession. It directly links to, and extends the focus of, the MSW program's mission to meet the needs of students and community stakeholders.

### **Master of Social Work Program Mission Statement**

The UCCS Master of Social Work program prepares advanced professional social workers for ethical and competent trauma-informed social work practice across diverse and different populations at micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice.

To accomplish this mission, we strive to meet the following goals:

- Educate advanced social work practitioners with knowledge, values, and skills necessary for ethical and competent practice across diverse and different populations with a focus on trauma-informed social work practice (competency 1 & 2)
- Engage students in a process of practice-informed research and research-informed practice (competency 4 & 7)
- Prepare social workers to provide regional leadership in the development and implementation of policies, programs, and services that support human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice and understand the ways trauma impacts all levels of practice (competency 5 & 3)
- Develop social workers who exemplify a commitment to the social work core values while engaging, intervening, and evaluating trauma-informed practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities (competency 6, 8 & 9)

## **The MSW Degree**

The MSW degree prepares students for ethical and competent trauma-informed social work practice. Social work is a hands-on profession that strives to help individuals, families, groups, and communities deal with a diverse set of problems. Our curriculum emphasizes trauma-informed social work practice with options to take electives that further prepare you for social work jobs in military, healthcare, child welfare, education, and community settings. Our experienced faculty members are practitioners and nationally recognized researchers committed to student excellence through a friendly and inviting culture of scholarship.

The UCCS Social Work curriculum is designed to train social workers to help individuals and communities face and solve diverse challenges. Our graduates are prepared for careers as professional social workers able to help individuals, families, groups, and communities enhance, restore and create conditions favorable to social functioning. They fuel success for the regional social service needs of today and tomorrow.

## **Administration**

The MSW Program Director is the key administrative officer for the program and serves as the central contact for questions regarding MSW policies. The MSW Committee provides faculty governance and guides the program. It is comprised of the MSW Program Director, MSW faculty, and the Social Work staff.

The Social Work Student Services Specialist provides information on applying to the program, registration and related issues, and serves as an advisor for students concerning basic degree planning. Students are assigned a faculty advisor upon acceptance into the program for professional and academic guidance throughout the program. The faculty advisor can provide valuable guidance on career planning, educational progression, and individual course options.

## **Accreditation**

The UCCS MSW program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education's Commission on Accreditation.

Accreditation of a baccalaureate or master’s social work program by the Council on Social Work Education’s Commission on Accreditation indicates that it meets or exceeds criteria for the assessment of program quality evaluated through a peer review process. An accredited program has sufficient resources to meet its mission and goals, and the Commission on Accreditation has verified that it demonstrates compliance with all sections of the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

Accreditation applies to all program sites and program delivery methods of an accredited program. Accreditation provides reasonable assurance about the quality of the program and the competence of students graduating from the program.

For more information about social work accreditation, you may contact [CSWE Accreditation](#).

### **Competency-Based Education**

Social Work education relies on competency-based education. “A competency-based approach identifies and assesses what students demonstrate in practice. In social work, this approach involves assessing students’ ability to demonstrate the competencies identified in the educational policy. Competency-based education rests on a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice situations in a culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being.” (CSWE, 2022, p. 7). To this end, MSW students work to attain the following 9 competencies, which are required by CSWE for all social work programs:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

## 2. SOCIAL WORK COMMITMENT TO ANTI-RACISM

### Introduction

The Social Work program at the University of Colorado Colorado Springs College of Public Service hereby declares its anti-racism stance. The mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and to help meet the basic needs of all people, with particular attention to those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. The ethical standards of the social work profession demand that social workers engage in social and political action in order to advance social justice, with a focus on vulnerable, disadvantaged, oppressed, and exploited individuals and groups. We recognize that the fulfillment of the mission and honoring the values and ethical standards of social work, requires direct and intentional opposition to the racist ideologies and white supremacy that are embedded in the foundations of our institutions and systems. Thus, in accordance with the mission and goals of UCCS and the College of Public Service, we are fully committed to anti-oppressive practice and anti-racism work.

### Anti-Racism in Context

We consider the declaration and fulfillment of our commitment to anti-racism to be an ethical imperative, given both the current sociocultural contexts of our society and the long history of racism in our country as a whole. Racism remains embedded in our institutions and affects people of color in the United States today. Our commitment to anti-racist education answers the call of our profession, as communicated by the NASW's statement on undoing racism through social work.

A legacy of racism is also apparent in the history and present contexts of the social work profession and education. A commitment to anti-racism requires intentional effort at the individual, program, school, university, community, and broader macro levels. As a result, UCCS Social Work strives to build a social work community that will engage anti-racism work in social work practice, education, and research. We also strive to educate social workers who will engage in anti-racism work in both social work practice and in educational contexts. UCCS Social Work will support and educate students through the BSW and MSW curricula in the following ways:

- In accordance with the 2022 competencies for social work education, will prepare students for anti-racist approaches to social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Our approaches to integrating antiracism into our curricula and school culture include but are not limited to:
  - At the micro level, UCCS Social Work will be engaged in:
    - Consciousness raising and reflexivity practice, targeting exploration of their personal values and affective reactions (EPAS Competency 1)
    - Analysis of the effects of the social worker on practice with diverse clients and constituencies (EPAS Competency 3).
    - Developing an understanding of diversity and a recognition of oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation, as well as exploring the role of privilege and power in one's life (EPAS Competency 2)

- Use of a trauma-informed lens to foster understanding of the impact of shared and individual traumas on the lives of clients from marginalized groups (EPAS Competency 4,6,7,8,9)
- Learning to effectively engage, assess, and treat diverse clients and constituencies (EPAS Competency 6,7,8)
- At the mezzo level, UCCS Social Work will be engaged in:
  - A focused creation of a diverse team and student body (EPAS Competency 2,3)
  - Fostering a culture of respect and inclusion (EPAS Competency 1)
  - A committed engagement of students in school governance through leadership opportunities (EPAS Competency 5)
  - Encouraging engagement in the university and community in ways that advance social and racial justice (EPAS Competency 2,3)
- At the macro level, UCCS Social Work will be engaged in:
  - Advocacy at the local, state, national, and international levels (EPAS Competency 2,5,6,7,8,9)
  - Building a curriculum featuring particular attention to the impact of social and economic policies on vulnerable clients and on the provision of social services (EPAS Competency 2,3)
  - Policy development, implementation, and evaluation skills for advancing social justice (EPAS Competency 2,5)

We will conduct an annual review of the UCCS Social Work program’s adherence to and embodiment of our anti-racism commitment. Below, please find the references cited in this statement, along with a list of relevant resources. (This is not an exhaustive list.)

### References

- National Association of Social Workers (NASW; 2007). Institutional racism and the social work profession: A call to action.
- UCCS (n.d.). Mission, Vision and Values
- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE; 2022). Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards.

### Resources: Faculty and Staff Favorites

- Atlas (2022). *Emotional Inheritance: A Therapist, Her Patients, and the Legacy of Trauma.* Little, Brown Spark. New York
- EmbraceRace. Raising a brave generation. Together.
- Dettlaff, A. A call to social workers to act against racism and white supremacy now.
- The Equity Matters Podcast.
- National Association of Social Workers. Undoing racism through social work.
- National Committee on Racial and Ethnic Diversity (NCORED). Anti-racism now and forever more.
- The National Museum of African American History and Culture. Being Antiracist.
- Speak out with Tim Wise. Podcasting for Resistance and Justice in the Age of Trump.

- Sue, D. W. (2013). Race talk: The psychology of racial dialogues. *American Psychologist*, 68(8), 663.
- UCS Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. [How to be anti-racist: A social worker's perspective.](#)

### **On-Campus Resources for Students**

- Office of Institutional Equity. *Resources.* <https://equity.uccs.edu/resources>
- Office of Institutional Equity. Get help for you or someone else. <https://equity.uccs.edu/>
- MOSAIC and LGBTQ+ Resource Center. <https://mosaic.uccs.edu>

### **Additional Resources**

- Colorado Department of Personnel and Administration. [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.](#)
- Jehangir, A. (2021). *My grandmother's hands: racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies.* Central Recovery Press. Las Vegas.
- Joyner, M. [Racism is America's human stain; Black Lives Matter.](#)
- NASW Colorado Chapter. [Racial justice.](#)
- [University of Colorado Colorado Springs. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#)
- UCS Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work (2018). [Honoring the African-American women who have changed social work.](#)
- Wilkins, E. J., Whiting, J. B., Watson, M. F., Russon, J. M., & Moncrief, A. M. (2013). Residual effects of slavery: What clinicians need to know. *Contemporary Family Therapy*, 35(1), 14-28.

### 3. APPLICATION AND ADMISSION

#### Admission Calendar

The MSW program follows a modified cohort model. As such, traditional MSW applicants (e.g., full-time and extended degree plan) are admitted in the fall semester only. Advanced standing applicants are admitted in the summer only.

Admission consideration for the traditional MSW program (e.g., full-time and extended degree plan) is conducted 3 times a year according to the dates posted on the internet. Generally, early applications are reviewed in December, Financial Aid priority applications are reviewed in February, and the final applications are reviewed in April.

Admission consideration for the Advanced Standing program is also conducted 3 times a year according to the dates posted on the internet. Generally, early applications are reviewed in December, Financial Aid priority applications are reviewed in February, and the final applications are reviewed in March.

If space remains after the final deadline for all MSW degree pathways, applications will remain open until the cohort is full or until 30 days prior to the first day of classes, whichever comes first. Students applying for financial aid, which include scholarships, should apply to the program no later than the Financial Aid priority deadline.

#### Full-Time and Extended Study MSW Program Prerequisites

Detailed requirements for applying to the College of Public Service may be found on CPS's website in the [Future Students](#) section. All applicants must [apply online](#).

The prerequisites for admission to the UCCS MSW program for full-time and extended study applicants include the following:

- A four-year undergraduate degree from an institution accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association (or the equivalent thereof as determined by the UCCS International Admissions if degree was earned outside of the U.S.).
- Grades sufficiently high to indicate the ability to pursue graduate work. Typically, this is a grade point average of 3.0 or better. However, when applicants have an exceptional application, those with a lower GPA may be considered. The UCCS Graduate School requires a GPA of 2.75 or higher for full admission to UCCS graduate programs.
- Successful MSW applicants may have majored in any field for the undergraduate degree. However, sufficient undergraduate preparation and training for graduate study in social welfare is required. We operationalize this as significant academic preparation in the social sciences roughly defined as at least 18 social science credits (anthropology, economics, ethnic studies, ethics, geography, history, linguistics, political science, psychology, sociology, etc.; in any combination).
- The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) is not required for admission to the MSW program.

## Advanced Standing MSW Program Prerequisites

Applicants with a baccalaureate social work degree earned within the last 10 years from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and an undergraduate GPA of 3.0 or higher are encouraged to apply for the advanced standing program (ASP).

The prerequisites for admission to the advanced standing UCCS MSW program include a baccalaureate social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education earned within 10 years of MSW program admission and an undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher.

International students with an undergraduate social work degree recognized through the CSWE International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors may also be considered for the advanced standing program. In such cases, the international degree must have been earned within 10 years of MSW program admission and the applicant must have the equivalent of an undergraduate cumulative GPA of 3.00 or higher. In rare instances, provisional admission for ASP applicants with a GPA of 2.75-2.99 (or the equivalent) may be considered on a case-by-case basis for highly qualified applicants. The Graduate Record Exam (GRE) **is not** required for admission to the advanced standing MSW program.

Applicants for whom more than 10 years have passed since earning the baccalaureate social work degree (BSW) must complete the 60-credit program as a full-time or extended study student. The reason for this is that the knowledge has improved, and the CSWE accreditation standards have changed at least twice since the degree was earned. Those applying to the MSW program with a degree from an undergraduate social work program that is not accredited by the CSWE are also required to complete the 60-credit program as a full-time or extended study student. Likewise, international students with an undergraduate social work degree that is not recognized by the CSWE International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors also required to complete the 60-credit program as a full-time or extended study student. The reason for this is that generalist practice content equivalence cannot be assured without certification from one of these bodies. In all these cases, the UCCS MSW faculty believe completing the generalist practice curriculum will not cause these students to repeat what was achieved in their baccalaureate social work program(s).

Those applying to the UCCS MSW program with a baccalaureate social work degree from a program in candidacy with CSWE may be considered for the advanced standing program on a contingency basis. In such cases, students cannot be fully awarded advanced standing status until they can document that their baccalaureate social work program was granted initial accreditation and that accredited status covers their degree. This affects students graduating close to / immediately before the baccalaureate program's initial accreditation date. In such cases, the student will not be permitted to graduate from the UCCS MSW program until the program in which they earned their undergraduate social work degree is granted CSWE accreditation.



## Required Application Materials for All Applicants

In general, applicants must submit the following:

- Online Graduate School Application
- \$60 non-refundable application fee
- Official transcripts from all institutions of higher education attended
- Contact information for 2 professional references (It is recommended that applicants select a cross-section of references, including employers, faculty or other individuals who have evaluated the applicant's work and can speak to the student's academic abilities and/or related paid work or volunteer experience)
- NOTE: Students applying to the advanced standing program must submit a copy of a practicum placement evaluation(s). If the applicant has not completed a placement but is currently enrolled in practicum, an evaluation from the practicum instructor or liaison must be included with the application. If the applicant completed the BSW practicum placement and cannot locate the evaluation, please include a letter outlining the reason it is missing and request a waiver for this document.
- Current resume detailing education, volunteer, and employment experiences, including beginning and ending month and year as well as the average hours worked or volunteered per week. Work or volunteer experience cannot be considered without this information.
- Professional statements (500 to 1,000 words for each question) are also required. The professional statement should address each of the following:

**Prompt 1:** Describe a social problem that relates to social justice.

- 1) Identify and articulate potential solutions to the problem.
- 2) Discuss the potential challenges that could surface in implementing those solutions.
- 3) Incorporate consideration of social work ethical values and principles and speak to how they have guided your approach to addressing this problem.

**Prompt 2:** Describe a challenge you have faced and how you addressed it. Provide a clear picture of the challenge, including:

- 1) The nature and origin of the challenge
- 2) Your role in the challenge
- 3) The impact of the challenge on you and others
- 4) Steps taken to address and resolve the challenge.
- 5) The professional impact of the challenge. How did overcoming this challenge influence the way you handle professional challenges?

**Prompt 3:** Describe your goals in the social work profession, addressing the following:

- 1) Preparation: What academic, professional, and life experiences that have prepared you for the MSW journey?
- 2) Resources and Support: Specify the resources and supports that will help you successfully complete the MSW program. Please speak to your readiness to manage both the academic rigor of the program and the emotional challenges that can come with working with the intense life experiences of the people and communities served by social workers).
- 3) Positionality: At the core of the social work profession is a commitment to the empowerment of marginalized individuals and groups. Discuss your preparedness for working with socially and economically disadvantaged populations, explicitly addressing your understanding of and commitment to anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

## **English as a Second Language and International Applicants**

English as a second language (ESL) students may apply after obtaining a minimum score of 80 on the TOEFL or 6.5 on the IELTS exams. If the applicant's scores do not meet these minimums, she/he/they will be asked to provide writing samples and to complete an interview in order for the school to more accurately assess applied (rather than tested) English language abilities.

International students have different general application requirements. Please see the [International Admissions website](#) for additional information.

## **Admissions Decisions**

Admission to the UCCS MSW program is competitive. Demand for the UCCS MSW program often exceeds capacity. UCCS MSW Admissions Committee decisions are final.

Applicants who are denied admission may not apply again during the same admission cycle but are welcome to apply in subsequent admission cycles.

## **Admissions Decisions for Financial Aid**

Students seeking financial aid must await formal approval for admission by the University. This process may take slightly longer than the CPS admissions process.

## **Admission Status**

When an applicant meets all admission qualifications, he/she/they are normally admitted with regular graduate status.

In cases where a student shows potential, but does not meet the minimum qualifications for admission, he/she/they MAY be admitted on provisional status. Such cases only occur when elements of his/her/their application suggest they may be able to perform successfully in the program.

Those admitted to the traditional MSW program on provisional status must earn a B- or better in SOWK 5001 and 5391 within the first 12 months of enrolling in the MSW program and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Those admitted to the Advanced Standing MSW program on provisional status must earn a B- or better in SOWK 5201 and 5202 within the first 12 months of enrolling in the MSW program and maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Upon completion of this criteria, the student is removed from provisional status. Failure to fulfill the provisional criteria will result in dismissal from the program.

Applicants who are not accepted for the advanced standing option will be considered for the full-time regular standing option unless the applicant specifies otherwise.

## **Transfer Student Admission Policy and Processes**

Transfer students are encouraged to apply for the program pathway that is most appropriate for their academic needs: Full-Time, Extended Study, or Advanced Standing MSW Program. All transfer students must submit the same materials as students applying to the given program and must submit

all materials outlined in the respective admission criteria. Transfer applications will be reviewed and evaluated using the same criteria as non-transfer students.

If an admission offer is made by the UCCS MSW program and accepted by the student, the student may complete the steps outlined in the transfer credit portion of the MSW student handbook. It is the discretion of the MSW Program Director whether or not to allow a course to be transferred.

Of note, students who transfer credits from another program within UCCS or from another institution may transfer up to 12-credit hours of master level work (e.g., 20% of the total MSW credits) into the full time and extended study MSW program, with prior approval from the MSW Director. Students with an earned doctorate seeking to earn the MSW may transfer up to 18-credit hours of master or doctoral level work (e.g., 30% of the total MSW credits). Students in the advanced standing program may request up to 3 courses (9 total credits) be taken at UCCS in programs other than the MSW program. Transfer credits from institutions other than UCCS are not permissible for students enrolled in the advanced standing program.

All transfer work must be at the B grade level or above from a regionally accredited college or university and taken within 6 years of the student's date of graduation. Credits completed more than 6 years from the student's date of graduation must be revalidated in accordance with UCCS Graduate School guidelines. It is the discretion of the MSW Program Director whether or not to allow a course to be considered for the revalidation process.

### **Taking Classes as a Non-degree Seeking Student**

Students who want to take elective courses rather than pursue an MSW degree should apply as a nondegree seeking student. Non-degree seeking students include those who are interested in exploring the courses and those who have a degree program application in process. Non-degree seeking students may apply to the MSW program in the future. If a non-degree seeking student applies and is admitted to the MSW program, no more than twelve credit hours of coursework taken as a non-degree seeking student may be applied to the MSW degree.

Non-degree seeking students must complete an [Application for Admission](#) to the University of Colorado Colorado Springs, selecting the certificate(s) they wish to pursue, submit official transcripts showing a bachelor's degree has been conferred, and submit a \$60 non-refundable application fee.

Taking courses as a non-degree seeking student contains some element of risk because admission to the program is not a certainty. Not all courses are available for non-degree seeking students, and prior approval from both the course instructor and the MSW Program Director are required prior to enrollment. Non-degree seeking students are also not permitted to take any 6000 level courses. Therefore, students who would like to become MSW degree seeking students are encouraged to apply as soon as possible. The non-degree status is most useful when a student wants to pursue electives only.

## **Readmission of Inactive, Withdrawn, and Suspended Students**

Students who have been admitted to CPS must complete their coursework and degree requirements within six years of registration in their first course. Exceptions must be approved in writing by the Dean of the College of Public Service and the Dean of the Graduate School.

Occasionally, students find it necessary to interrupt their coursework for one or more semesters. An extended interruption, however, may result in the student being placed on inactive or withdrawn status. Students who do not enroll in any classes during the semester for which they were admitted, and students who have not registered for classes for three consecutive semesters (including summer), are placed on inactive or discontinued status. In order to register for courses again, a discontinued student must reapply to the University and resubmit a tuition classification form to Admissions. Students needing a leave of absence of one year or more are required to fill out a Leave of Absence form (available from the student services specialist). If more than one year has passed since the student's original application, and a Leave of Absence form is not on file, a new full application form must be submitted. The student will also need to obtain approval from CPS for re-entry into the program. Contact the student services specialist at 719.255.4048 for more information.

A dismissed student is eligible to reapply for admission no sooner than one year after dismissal. Approval or rejection of this application rests with the MSW Program Director.

## 4. MSW PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### Full-time and Extended Degree Requirements

To earn an MSW degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester hours of graduate coursework with a total grade-point average of B (3.0) or better;
- Complete 900 hours of practicum placement, of which 400 hours are to be completed in the generalist year at the 5000 level (must be split into 200 hours during each of the Fall and Spring semesters) and 500 are to be completed the specialization year at the 6000 level (must be split into 250 hours during each of the Fall and Spring semesters)
- Receive a grade of B- (2.7) or better in all courses

### Advanced Standing Degree Requirements

To earn an MSW degree, a student must:

- Complete a minimum of 36 semester hours of graduate coursework with a total grade-point average of B (3.0) or better;
- Complete 500 hours of practicum placement at the 6000 level (250 hours during each semester)
- Receive a grade of B- (2.7) or better in all courses

### Time Requirements for MSW Degree

The time to completion depends on the number of courses a student successfully completes each semester. Students in the full-time MSW program should expect to complete the degree in no less than 2 years. Students in the extended MSW program should expect to complete the degree in no less than 3 or 4 years. Students in the advanced standing MSW program should expect to complete the degree in no less than 1 year.

Students must complete their degree no later than six years after the starting date of their first MSW class, even when that course is taken as a non-degree seeking student.

### Acceptable Grades

Students must receive a grade of B- or better in all courses applied toward the degree. In order to remain in good academic standing and to receive their degree, a student is required to maintain at least a B (3.0) grade point average, which includes all work required for the MSW degree while taken at UCCS (classified and unclassified) and may differ from the University grade point average.

A student who receives a grade below B- in a course may repeat that course once, with the approval of the MSW Program Director, provided the course has not been previously applied toward a degree. The grade received in a repeated course may substitute for the original grade and only the latter grade will be used in calculating the student's MSW grade point average required for graduation. However, all grades received during the student's graduate school experience will appear on the student's transcript and will be used in calculating the student's UCCS grade point average.

Many MSW courses have prerequisites and are only offered once a year. As such, receiving a grade below B- in any course may impact the student's ability to take subsequent courses and continue on their original course of study/pathway. When such cases arise, students who earned a C in a required course who were also approved to retake that course, may continue taking their original course of study, including courses with the prerequisites that needed to be retaken. However, students with a D or F are not permitted to take courses with such prerequisites. If approved to retake the course, the student must successfully complete the course in which a D or F were earned prior to taking courses that have that course as a prerequisite. It is the onus of the student to work with their faculty advisor, the Social Work Student Support Specialist and the MSW Program Director to make the appropriate changes to the student's degree plan when grades below B- impact the student's course of study.

## Required Courses

All Traditional MSW students must complete the following required courses:

<i>Generalist Practice Coursework</i>		Credits
SOWK 5001	Skills for Social Work Practice	3
SOWK 5002	Social Work with Individuals	3
SOWK 5006	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3
SOWK 5391	P.R.O.P. in Social Work	3
SOWK 5390	Rethinking Social Policy	3
SOWK 5004	Organization and Community Social Work	3
SOWK 5005	Group and Family Systems	3
SOWK 5003	Research Methods for Practitioners	3
SOWK 5111	Generalist Practicum Placement I	3
SOWK 5112	Generalist Practicum Placement II	3
<i>Specialized Practice Coursework</i>		
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology and Trauma	3
SOWK 6002	Trauma and Violence	3
SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3
SOWK 6059	Advanced Therapeutic Interventions	3
SOWK 6111	Specialized Practicum Placement I	3
SOWK 6112	Specialized Practicum Placement II	3
SOWK 6113	Trauma Informed Seminar	3

## *Electives*

Elective	3
Elective	3
Elective	3

**Total Credits Required 60**

Course descriptions may be found in the [Academic Catalog](#).

### **Practicum (Field) Placement Requirements**

As defined by the Council on Social Work Education: “Field education is the signature pedagogy for social work. Signature pedagogies are elements of instruction and socialization that teach future practitioners the fundamental dimensions of professional work in their discipline: to think, to perform, and to act intentionally, ethically, and with integrity. The field setting is where students apply human rights principles from global and national social work ethical codes to advance social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. It fosters a learning environment where anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion are valued. Field education is designed to integrate the theoretical and conceptual contributions of the explicit curriculum in the field setting. It is a basic precept of social work education that the two interrelated components of curriculum—classroom and field—are of equal importance, and each contributes to the development of the requisite competencies of professional practice. Field education is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated based on criteria and measures of student acquisition and demonstration of the nine social work competencies. Responding to the changing nature of the practice world and student demographics and characteristics, field education programs articulate how they maintain or enhance students’ access to high-quality field practicum experiences” (CSWE, 2022, p. 20).

Practicum (field) provides an opportunity for the student to apply the general knowledge of theories and principles presented in the classroom to problems and challenges in the field. The practicum experience allows the student to try on and develop the role of professional social worker. The practicum instructor serves as a mentor, role model, and a source of feedback to the student regarding the student's performance and professional growth. Therefore, the purpose of field practicum is summed up in three words: integration, application, and socialization. The student integrates what has been learned, applies that knowledge in specific practice situations, and in the process, develops an identity as an emerging, professional social worker.

Practicum (field) gives students the opportunity to connect theory with practice (integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge), experience situations that focus attention on the use of social work values/ethics and encourage identification with the purposes and functions of the profession. Additionally, students have the opportunity to acquire expertise in assessment and intervention at all levels of client systems from the individual (micro practice), family and group (mezzo practice), to the organizational and community (macro practice).

**Generalist Practice Practicum:** During the generalist practice year MSW practicum (SOWK 5111 and 5112), students have the opportunity to observe the practicum instructor and other appropriate professionals as approved by the practicum instructor, and to practice alongside these professionals as they build initial skills and incorporate theoretical perspectives and research informed intervention techniques from classroom learning. Students must complete no less than 400 Generalist Practice Field hours, with hours distributed evenly across the Fall and Spring semester and paced with delivery of the 5111 and 5112 practicum seminar sessions.

**Specialized Practice Practicum:** During the specialization year MSW practicum (SOWK 5111, 5112 and 5113), students are expected to take on increasing levels of autonomous practice, especially as the practicum progresses. Students will continue to be supervised by the practicum instructor as they move in the direction of “doing” more than “observing,” as would have been the case during foundation practicum. Skills at the specialization level are expected to incorporate more complexity in terms of a) trauma informed social work practice, b) systems addressed and their problems; c) theoretical perspective and interventions employed; and d) problem-solving skills and independent critical thinking of the student, all under the watchful eye of the practicum instructor as supervisor. Students must complete no less than 500 Specialized Practice Field hours, with hours distributed evenly across the Fall and Spring semester and paced with delivery of the 6111 and 6112 practicum seminar sessions.

**Social Work Practicum Placement Manual:** The [Social Work Practicum Placement Manual](#) is available on the UCCS Department of Social Work Website and through the MSW Practicum Director. Please refer to it for specifics related to practicum placement policies and procedures.

## **Electives**

In addition to completing the required courses, students must complete three elective courses (9 credit hours). The MSW program and CPS both offer a wide variety of electives. Some are offered on a routine basis; others may be a one-time offering.

Students may choose to pursue a 12-credit hour graduate certificate concurrent with their MSW program, with available graduate certificates including: 1) Nonprofit Management, 2) Criminal Justice, and 3) Grant Writing, Management, and Program Evaluation. However, it is important to note that since the MSW curriculum includes only nine credit hours, pursuit of this pathway requires completion of three credit hours beyond what is required for the MSW itself. Students pursuing a graduate certificate may use the nine elective-credit hours required for their MSW programming to complete courses associated with the desired certificate, and then take 3 credit hours beyond typical programming to complete the fourth required course for the certificate.

## **Transfer Credits**

Students who transfer credits from another program within UCCS or from another institution may transfer up to 12-credit hours of master level work (e.g., 20% of the total MSW credits) into the full time and extended study MSW program, with prior approval from the MSW Director. Students with an earned doctorate seeking to earn the MSW may transfer up to 18-credit hours of master or doctoral



level work (e.g., 30% of the total MSW credits). Students in the advanced standing program may request up to 3 courses (9 total credits) be taken at UCCS in programs other than the MSW program. Transfer credits from institutions other than UCCS are not permissible for students enrolled in the advanced standing program.

All transfer work must be at the B grade level or above from a regionally accredited college or university and taken within 6 years of the student's date of graduation. Credits completed more than 6 years from the student's date of graduation must be revalidated in accordance with UCCS Graduate School guidelines. It is the discretion of the MSW Program Director whether or not to allow a course to be considered for the revalidation process.

Upon approval by the MSW Program Director, a revalidation committee will be formed consisting of at least 2 UCCS faculty members. The course revalidation committee will review the student's materials and develop a series of questions that will be used to revalidate the course. The committee will then review the student's responses and determine whether the student meets the requirements for course revalidation. It is the sole discretion of the committee to make the determination. The MSW Program Director will make the final determination if the committee cannot make a final decision.

Credits applied to another master's degree may not be considered for transfer. Credits taken as an undergraduate student may not be considered for transfer, regardless of the level the course was taken.

Not all courses offered in the CU System, nor other colleges and universities, are transferrable to the UCCS MSW program. Transfer work must be relevant to the social work profession. Only courses from a social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and taught by an MSW trained instructor with at least 2 years of practice experience may be considered for practice courses. Field Practicum courses and trauma informed seminar are not transferable. Therefore, preapproval from the MSW Program Director is required for all courses taken outside the UCCS MSW program.

Transfer requests must be submitted to the MSW Program Director and the Student Services Specialist via e-mail. When making the request please include the following information:

- The course or courses which you would like transferred
- Copies of the syllabi for each course being considered in the transfer request
- A brief narrative describing the course and identifying the course which you believe it should replace (e.g., specific course name and number or elective). Please note, this is only a suggestion. The MSW Program Director makes the final determination about both whether a course will transfer and what MSW requirement it will replace.
- Please remember this request will become part of your official UCCS record. As such, make sure your request is professionally written and formatted.

## **Course Waivers**

MSW students are encouraged to pursue a course waiver for generalist practice courses if they have already covered the material and demonstrated the relevant competencies in graduate level course work that was completed within six years of the student's anticipated MSW graduation date with

grades of B or better. Course waivers will not reduce the number of credit hours required to complete the MSW degree. Advanced-standing students are not eligible for course waivers.

See the directions included under the course waiver process subheading. Please note, this process is different from course transfer and is most applicable for courses taken that were applied to another graduate degree.

The following generalist practice courses are eligible for course waivers:

- Organization & Community Social Work (SOWK 5004)
- Individual Social Work (SOWK 5002)
- Research Methods for Practitioners (SOWK 5003)
- Group and Family Systems (SOWK 5005)
- Human Behavior & the Social Environment (SOWK 5006)
- Rethinking Social Policy (SOWK 5390)

Course waivers are not available for Skills for Social Work Practice (SOWK 5001), P.R.O.P. in Social Work (SOWK 5391), Generalist Practicum Placement I (SOWK 5111), Generalist Practicum Placement II (SOWK 5112) and any specialized practice course (SOWK 6000 and above).

Courses that are graded by narrative evaluation, pass/fail, satisfactory/unsatisfactory, or on similar evaluative scales are not eligible for course waiver review. Prior work experience is not a basis for course waivers.

No more than 2 courses may be waived per student (6 credit hours). Course substitution requests and course transfer requests are additive. This means that students are not eligible to request a combination of course transfer and course waiver credit hours that exceed 20% of the total MSW credit hours if the student is only using master's credit hours for the transfer/waivers, or 30% of the total MSW credit hours if the student is only using doctoral credit hours for the transfer/waivers.

**Course Waiver Request Process:** The course waiver process is student-initiated. If one of the identified generalist practice courses was completed six years prior to the student's anticipated MSW graduation date with a grade of B or better AND covered major components of a course, a student may begin the course waiver request process. Course waiver requests may be submitted as soon as a student is admitted to the MSW program but must be submitted no later than the semester the student enters specialized practicum placement I (SOWK 6111).

Course Waiver requests must be submitted to the MSW Program Director and the Student Services Specialist via e-mail. When making the request students need to include the following information:

- The course or courses which the student would like to waive
- Copies of the syllabi for each course being considered in the course waiver request
- A brief narrative describing the course and identifying the course which the student believes it should replace (e.g., specific course name and number). Please note, this is only a suggestion. The lead course instructor and the MSW Program Director make the final determination about whether a course will be waived.

- Please remember this request will become part of the student's official UCCS record. As such, the onus is on the student to make sure the request is professionally written and formatted.

Course waivers must be approved by both the lead instructor for the course and the MSW Program Director. The decision of the course waiver review is final. Course waiver requests that are denied may not be resubmitted. However, students are welcome to request waivers for other courses that meet course waiver criteria.

Receiving a course waiver for a generalist practice course does not lower the number of credit hours required for completion of the MSW. Students receiving course waivers will still need to complete 60 graduate credit hours. Receiving course waivers will increase the number of elective credits that a student can complete in the program.

### **Typical Course Load**

Students pursuing the full-time MSW course sequence enroll in fifteen credit hours (five classes) each fall and spring semester. Students pursuing the extended MSW course sequence enroll in six (two classes) to nine (three classes) credit hours each fall, spring and summer semester. Students taking the full-time Advanced Standing Program (ASP) complete the MSW in one year, enrolling in six credit hours (two classes) in the summer and then 15 credit hours (5 classes) each during the spring and fall semesters. The ASP may also be completed more slowly. A two-year option involves completing one class (3 credit hours) in the first summer, followed by three classes during each of the following fall and spring semesters (9 credits each semester; 18 total). In year two, the student again completes one class (3 credit hours) during the summer semester. They then take two courses during each of the following fall and spring semesters (6 credits each semester; 12 total), with one of the courses each semester being specialized practicum.

At UCCS, graduate students are considered to be full-time when taking five or more credit hours during the fall or spring semesters, or three or more credit hours during the summer semester.

### **Independent Study**

Students who are interested in pursuing a specific line of study or inquiry not covered through the regular course offerings, may elect to take SOWK 9500: Independent Study with a member of the faculty. Students should first consider what area of study they would like to pursue and discuss the topic with a willing faculty member who has expertise in the area. Students must submit the [Petition for Independent Study form](#).

With faculty assistance, students then develop a course of study that meets the requirements of the University and CPS, as well as student needs. No more than six hours of independent study credit may apply toward MSW degree requirements.

### **Portfolio as the Culminating Experience**

All MSW students are required to complete SOWK 6113: Trauma Informed Seminar. The Trauma Informed Seminar is typically taken during the last semester of the student's degree program and is a

corequisite with SOWK 6112 Specialized Practicum Placement II. Trauma Informed Seminar cannot be taken during the summer semester or transferred in from another school or university.

Trauma Informed Seminar builds on competencies gained in the generalist and specialized practicum placements by providing a forum for integration and consolidation. The course also links classroom content to real-world application by covering preparation for advanced social work practice, job search skills, and preparation for the social work licensure exam. Successful completion of a comprehensive portfolio serves as the UCCS Graduate School culminating experience requirement and is also used as the primary program assessment tool for the MSW program. As such, all students must receive a passing score on the portfolio.

Each student has access to folio in their Canvas portal. It is recommended that students use this site as a repository for assignments that link to the course competencies. Uploading the assignments at the end of each semester will help prepare the student for successful completion of the culminating experience.

## **Thesis Option**

The thesis option is available for MSW students who are interested in pursuing a topic in-depth or who are planning to pursue a career in research or academia. The Master's Thesis course (SOWK 6950) presents students with the opportunity to apply knowledge gained in coursework to a question of interest drawn from their current or future careers in public or nonprofit organizations. The thesis requires six semester hours of credit that normally spans two semesters. To oversee their work, students must select a thesis advisor from the Social Work faculty and have this approved by the MSW Program Director.

The thesis takes the place of 6 elective credits. Students choosing to pursue a Thesis must also complete a specialized practicum placement and the specialized practicum course sequence (SOWK 6111 and 6112) as part of their MSW curriculum.

Thesis students typically conduct a comprehensive review of the theoretical and research literature in the subject area of their thesis and collect original data or analyze existing data in new ways.

Minimum eligibility requirements for pursuing a thesis include:

- Matriculation in the MSW program
- Successful completion of all generalist practice courses
- Overall GPA of 3.75 or higher
- Preliminary identification of a thesis topic or area of interest
- Agreement of two faculty members to serve on the thesis committee (one as Thesis Advisor)

A student wishing to undertake the thesis option applies formally through her/his/their faculty academic advisor, first, to establish eligibility with respect to the above criteria, and second, to identify appropriate faculty members to serve on the student's thesis committee. The thesis committee consists of three people: a major advisor who is a Social Work faculty member, and two others. One of these must be a Social Work faculty member, though the person can be a part-time instructor (e.g., an

adjunct faculty member). The other is a reader who has expertise in the area and can be from UCCS Department of Social Work, another school or department, or from the community. (NOTE: Although the formal procedures entail application through the academic advisor, the student is encouraged to make informal contacts with appropriate subject-matter faculty to determine interest and availability.)

### **The UCCS MSW Program Does Not Grant Credit for Life Experience**

The UCCS MSW program does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience.

## 5. COURSE SEQUENCE OPTIONS

### MSW Course Sequencing, Full-Time, Extended, and Advanced Standing

The traditional UCCS MSW program can be completed in 2, 3, or 4 years, depending on how many courses a student takes each semester.

Students enrolled in the MSW program may choose to complete the program in 2 years as full-time students or in 3 to 4 years as extended study students.

### MSW Course Sequence Option: Full-Time 2-Year Option

#### Year 1 Generalist Practice

Fall		Spring				
SOWK 5001	Skills for Social Work Practice	3	SOWK 5004	Organization & Community Social Work	3	
SOWK 5002	Individual Social Work	3	SOWK 5005	Group and Family Systems	3	
SOWK 5006	Human Behavior & the Social Environment	3	SOWK 5003	Research Methods for Practitioners	3	
SOWK 5391	P.R.O.P in Social Work	3	SOWK 5390	Rethinking Social Policy	3	
SOWK 5111	Generalist Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	Generalist Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>

#### Year 2 Specialized Practice

Fall		Spring				
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology & Traum	3	SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3	
SOWK 6002	Trauma & Violence	3	Elective	Elective	3	
SOWK 6059	Advanced Therapeutic Interventions	3	Elective	Elective	3	
Elective	Elective	3	SOWK 5113	*Trauma Informed Seminar	3	
SOWK 6111	Specialized Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	*Specialized Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>15</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		<b>15</b>

\*To ensure the culminating experience reflects the entire curriculum, Specialized Field Placement II and the Trauma Informed Seminar must be taken in the final semester of the program regardless of course sequence option.

## MSW Course Sequence Option: Extended Study 3 Year Option

### Year 1 Generalist Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 5001	Skills for Social Work Practice	3	SOWK 5004	Organization & Community Social Work	3	
SOWK 5391	P.R.O.P in Social Work	3	SOWK 5390	Rethinking Social Policy	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
			<b>6</b>			
Summer						
SOWK 5002	Individual Social Work	3	SOWK 5005	Group and Family Systems	3	
			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			
			<b>6</b>			

**Note:** Summer courses are optional. Students may take Individual Social Work (SOWK 5002) and Small Group Interventions (SOWK 5005) and/or an elective in the summer between year 1 and 2. Students who are unable to take summer courses may take these courses in the Fall (SOWK 5002) and Spring (SOWK 5005) semesters.

### Year 2 Generalist Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 5006	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3	SOWK 5003	Research Methods for Practitioners	3	
SOWK 5111	Generalist Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	Generalist Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
			<b>6</b>			
Summer						
Elective		3	Elective		3	
			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			
			<b>6</b>			

### Year 3 Specialized Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology & Trauma	3	SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3	
SOWK 6002	Trauma & Violence	3	Elective	Elective	3	
SOWK 6059	Advanced Therapeutic Interventions	3	SOWK 5113	*Trauma Informed Seminar	3	
SOWK 6111	Specialized Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	*Specialized Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>12</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
			<b>12</b>			

## MSW Course Sequence Option: Extended Study 4 Year Option

### Year 1 Generalist Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 5001	Skills for Social Work Practice	3	SOWK 5004	Organization & Community Social Work	3	
SOWK 5391	P.R.O.P in Social Work	3	SOWK 5390	Rethinking Social Policy	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
<b>Summer</b>						
SOWK 5002	Individual Social Work				3	
			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			
			<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>		

### Year 2 Generalist Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 5006	Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3	SOWK 5003	Research Methods for Practitioners	3	
SOWK 5111	Generalist Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	Generalist Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
<b>Summer</b>						
SOWK 5005	Group and Family Systems				3	
			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			
			<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>		

### Year 3 Specialized Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology & Trauma	3	SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3	
SOWK 6002	Trauma & Violence	3	SOWK 5112	Elective	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
<b>Summer</b>						
	Elective	3		Elective	3	
			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			
			<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>		

### Year 4 Specialized Practice

Fall			Spring			
SOWK 6059	Adv. Therapeutic Interventions	3	SOWK 5113	*Trauma Informed Seminar	3	
SOWK6111	Specialized Practicum I	3	SOWK 6112	*Specialized Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
			<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>		



## Advanced Standing Course Sequence Options

Advanced standing students follow a different course sequence, which requires a summer start date. The program may be completed in 1 or more years depending on the needs of the student.

### Summer Start is Required for All Advanced Standing Students

#### Advanced Standing Full-Time One Year Option

Summer Introduction					
Summer					
SOWK 5201	Policy and P.R.O.P for Advanced Standing	3	SOWK 5202	Advanced Standing Seminar	3
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>					<b>6</b>
Specialized Practice					
Fall			Spring		
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology & Trauma	3	SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3
SOWK 6002	Trauma & Violence	3	Elective	Elective	3
SOWK 6059	Advanced Therapeutic Interventions	3	Elective	Elective	3
Elective	Elective	3	SOWK 5113	*Trauma Informed Seminar	3
SOWK 6111	Specialized Practicum I	3	SOWK 5112	*Specialized Practicum II	3
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>		
<b>15</b>			<b>15</b>		

\*To ensure the culminating experience reflects the entire curriculum, Specialized Field Placement II and the Trauma Informed Seminar must be taken in the final semester of the program regardless of course sequence option.

## Advanced Standing Two Year Option

### Summer Introduction

#### Summer

SOWK 5202	Advanced Standing Seminar	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Year 1

Fall				Spring			
SOWK 6001	Psychopathology & Trauma	3		SOWK 6003	Treatment of Trauma	3	
SOWK 6059	Advanced Therapeutic Interventions	3		Elective	Elective	3	
Elective	Elective	3		Elective	Elective	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>9</b>

#### Summer

SOWK 5201	Policy and P.R.O.P. Bridge Course	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>3</b>

#### Year 2

Fall				Spring			
SOWK 6002	Trauma and Violence	3		SOWK 5113	*Trauma Informed Seminar	3	
SOWK 6111	Specialized Practicum I	3		SOWK 6112	*Specialized Practicum II	3	
<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>Total Student Credit Hours</b>			<b>6</b>

## 6. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

### Generalist Practice Courses

The generalist practice courses target content common across all social work education programs. Required generalist coursework includes the following list of courses.

**Skills for Social Work Practice (SOWK 5001):** Presents introduction concepts including social work history, values, ethics, micro practice, and macro practice. Designed to socialize students into the social work profession, prepare students to enter the practicum experience, and promote the development of professional values, ethics, behaviors, and competence. Provides a concrete opportunity for students to integrate, synthesize, and apply classroom learning in the practice environment.

**Individual Social Work (SOWK 5002):** Presents generalist foundation theories of practice essential to social work practice with individuals while considering the person-in-environment contexts in which social workers practice. The primary emphasis of the course is on assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and evaluation. The theories used in this course provide different models for understanding human behavior, as well as how to create and evaluate planned change. Content on multiculturalism, diversity, social justice, and social change issues are integrated into all aspects of the course. Students examine social work values and ethics as well as issues of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and ability as these relate to interpersonal practice with individuals.

**Research Methods for Practitioners (SOWK 5003):** Examines the research methods used to answer questions and test hypotheses in public and non-profit settings. Methods covered include identifying and reviewing scholarly literature; formulating research questions; selecting the appropriate design, data collection, and sampling strategies; and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data.

**Organization and Community Social Work (SOWK 5004):** Presents the history and development of community and administrative practice in social work. Surveys theory and builds skills in many roles associated with community and administrative practice. Emphasis is placed on the structure and culture of communities, engaging with a community organization to build relationships, designing programs in response to community needs, and evaluating the effectiveness of programs. In addition, issues of diverse dimensions [e.g., ability, age, class, color, culture, ethnicity, family structure, gender (including gender identity and gender expression), marital status, national origin, race, religion or spirituality, sex, and sexual orientation] will be emphasized throughout, with special focus on culturally sensitive practice (i.e., multicultural community organizing, culturally sensitive management practices, culturally sensitive analyses of policy proposals and their impact, and culturally sensitive research practices).

**Group and Family Systems (SOWK 5005):** Generalist practice overview on methods to restore, maintain, and promote social functioning as it relates to families and small groups. Basic practice skills will be introduced, including communication skills and techniques, relationship skills, and use of self. Students will learn how to assess and address family and small group problems, and to employ a variety of strategies and techniques such as programs, structured activities, exercises, etc. The course

will also consider how gender, ethnicity, race, social class, sexual orientation, and different abilities impact various aspects of family and group functioning and the selection of intervention strategies.

**Human Behavior and the Social Environment (SOWK 5006):** Provides students with critical perspectives on a variety of theoretical frameworks used to understand regularities and irregularities in human development and functioning across the life span. One important focus is the ecological developmental approach, which emphasizes the ways in which culture and the broader social environment shape human behavior and identity, both in terms of general patterns and unique configurations. Particular attention is paid to culture, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as dynamic social constructions that can be sources of both oppression and strength at all levels of social systems. A second focus is on the biological, psychological, and spiritual person and the interrelatedness of emotion and cognition, neurobiology, and the social environment. Emphasizes the changing, dynamic, and interactive processes that shape human behavior and development of self across the life span.

**Rethinking Social Policy (SOWK 5390):** Provides an overview of United States social welfare policies and programs beginning with the New Deal and progressing to study of major social welfare issues, the political and social contexts in which social policies and programs are developed and implemented, and the conflicts and reform efforts that arise.

**Power, Racism, Oppression, and Privilege in Social Work Practice (SOWK 5391)** The social work Code of Ethics centers commitment to social justice and anti-racist practice. This class helps social workers develop a lens of society that embodies awareness of how systems contribute to oppression and inequality. Participants learn generalist frameworks and skills for intervention, with key emphasis upon social welfare history and psychological and social work theories and concepts. Students engage an iterative process of developing self-awareness and challenging their role in oppressive systems, thus shaping their identities as social workers. Emphasizing diversity, power dynamics, racism, oppression, and privilege, the course equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to engage work that dismantles systemic barriers to equity.

**Generalist Practicum Placement I (SOWK 5111):** First course of the two-course generalist field placement sequence. The course requires completion of a minimum of 200 practicum hours at an approved social service agency and classroom-based field integration sessions. Students are provided the context to put their social work knowledge, values, and skills to use in professional practice. Prepares students for work as generalist social workers, helps them learn to apply critical thinking skills, and increases their range of social work skills and techniques. The course also helps develop a self-awareness about one's cognitive and affective processes in relation to professional practice and an understanding about the social work profession, perspective, and values.

**Generalist Practicum Placement II (SOWK 5112):** Second course of the two-course generalist field placement sequence. The course requires completion of a minimum of 200 practicum hours at an approved social service agency and classroom-based field integration sessions. Students are provided the context to put their social work knowledge, values, and skills to use in professional practice. Prepares students for work as generalist social workers, helps them learn to apply critical thinking skills, and increases their range of social work skills and techniques. The course also helps develop a

self-awareness about one's cognitive and affective processes in relation to professional practice and an understanding about the social work profession, perspective, and values.

## **Specialized Practice Courses**

The specialized practice curriculum provides a strong pedagogical foundation for trauma-informed social work practice. The trauma-informed practice sequence is designed to equip social workers with the skills they need to provide trauma-informed care across a wide range of target populations.

Required specialized practice coursework includes the following list of courses.

**Psychopathology and Trauma (SOWK 6001):** Uses a trauma-informed lens to view mental health conditions including diagnostic issues and the impact specific diagnoses have on behavior. Psychopathology and mental disorders from a trauma-informed and ecological perspective are examined. Emphasis is placed on understanding biopsychosocial influences on the incidence, course, and treatment of the most commonly presented mental health related disorders and the impact of trauma on etiology and presentation across diverse populations. Students learn diagnostic skills as they relate to comprehensive social work assessment and the development of social work interventions. Ethical issues, collaboration with families, knowledge of psychopharmacology, and the varied roles social workers play in mental health settings are stressed.

**Trauma and Violence (SOWK 6002):** Emphasizes trauma-informed practice with client systems and across a range of diverse populations using the world health organization (WHO) categories of violence (self-directed, interpersonal, and collective). Consideration is given to violence that occurs within the family (e.g., intimate partner violence, child maltreatment/ neglect/ abuse, and elder abuse), the community (e.g., violent crime, gang violence, homicide), and society as a whole (e.g., social, economic, and political violence). Trauma-informed approaches to working with both offenders and victims/survivors across diverse populations are addressed. Special attention is given to the needs of families affected by poverty, persons with emotional and developmental disabilities, and the role of policy on direct practice. Core practice frameworks may encompass safety planning, crisis intervention, collaborative service delivery, and strengths-based intervention models.

**Treatment of Trauma (SOWK 6003):** Examines roles, assessments, and intervention strategies for social workers working with clients exposed to specific types of trauma (e.g., rape, war, natural disasters). Emphasis is placed on understanding biopsychosocial influences, psychopharmacology, incidence, course, treatment and evidence-based assessment and interventions skills. Presents an advanced theoretic approach to social work interventions with clients and client systems impacted by trauma across multiple populations in which social workers practice.

**Advanced Therapeutic Interventions (SOWK 6059)** This course supports students in gaining advanced clinical skills to use in therapeutic interventions. Each week, we will explore practical tools for advancing your skills as a social work therapist from active listening to using mindfulness techniques. The course will support applied knowledge in counseling techniques, psychodynamic psychotherapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), dialectical behavioral therapy (DBT), family therapy, motivational interviewing (MI) and narrative therapy. Students will learn these evidence-based interventions and then apply the different therapy modalities to case vignettes to actively practice these advanced therapeutic interventions. Clinical evaluation will be covered, with an emphasis on skills for

evaluating the outcomes of clinical interventions. The course will conclude with a focus on building an integrative practice that involves selecting techniques from different therapeutic orientations to best support your client(s), including using cultural adaptations. Prer., Graduate Social Work students only

**Trauma Informed Seminar (SOWK 6113):** Builds on competencies gained throughout the MSW curriculum by providing a forum to solidify academic content with real world social work practice experiences. Places emphasis on integrating practicum experiences and course content. The course moves through micro, mezzo and macro levels of trauma informed social work practice across a range of social work settings. Content covers preparation for advanced trauma-informed social work practice, job search skills, and preparation for the social work licensure exam. The course is taken concurrently with the Specialized Field Placement II (SOWK 6112) in the final semester of the MSW program.

**Specialized Practicum Placement I (SOWK 6111):** First course of the two-course specialized field placement sequence. The course requires completion of a minimum of 250 practicum hours at an approved social service agency and classroom-based field integration sessions. Students are provided the context to put their social work knowledge, values, and skills to use in an advanced social work practice setting. The experience prepares students for work as trauma informed social workers, helps them learn to apply critical thinking skills, and increases their range of social work skills and techniques. The specialized practicum practice experience provides opportunities for complex application of social work theories, models, values, and ethics in trauma informed social work practice.

**Specialized Practicum Placement II (SOWK 6112):** Second course of the two-course specialized field placement sequence. The course requires completion of a minimum of 250 practicum hours at an approved social service agency and classroom-based field integration sessions. Students are provided the context to put their social work knowledge, values, and skills to use in an advanced social work practice setting. The experience prepares students for work as trauma informed social workers, helps them learn to apply critical thinking skills, and increases their range of social work skills and techniques. The specialized practicum practice experience provides opportunities for complex application of social work theories, models, values, and ethics in trauma informed social work practice. The course is taken concurrently with the Trauma Informed Seminar (SOWK 6113) in the final semester of the MSW program.

## **Elective Courses**

The UCCS MSW curriculum includes 4 electives that build upon the generalist practice curriculum, expand the trauma informed social work practice curriculum, and target areas of high regional need. MSW students may select 4 electives based on their individual educational and career goals. With this, they may take one or more electives in each area depending on interests. Further integration of trauma informed content occurs in the final course in the program, Trauma Informed Seminar (SOWK 6113). Elective coursework includes the following list of courses.

**Child Welfare I: History, Programs, and Policies (SOWK 6051):** Provides a historic overview and contemporary application of child welfare policy, problems in policy development, and contemporary American child welfare services in both public and private domains. Uses a trauma informed lens to

study the child welfare system and examine history, racial disparities and their impact on state and federal policies and programs pertinent to child maltreatment and juvenile justice.

**Child Welfare II: Skills and Practice Methods (SOWK 6052):** Provides an overview of the roles and responsibilities of social workers practicing within the child welfare system. Focuses on mastery of trauma informed practice skills at a range of levels (e.g., individual, family, and environment) to develop culturally competent child welfare workers. Emphasis on the special challenges, needed skills, and different strategies and interventions in the provision of culturally responsive and trauma informed child welfare services.

**Social Work in Health and Behavioral Health Settings (SOWK 6053):** Prepares students for trauma informed social work practice in health and behavioral health care settings. Students gain knowledge, skills and proficiency in applying theoretical models and evidence-based interventions. Focuses on five critical health practice competency areas: psychosocial assessment, treatment interventions, interdisciplinary teamwork, ethics, and leadership. Students will explore social work roles across a range of healthcare settings.

**Wellness, Recovery, and Integrated Care (SOWK 6054):** Provides a foundation for trauma informed social work practice within the public health, behavioral health, and integrated care health systems. Focuses on cutting edge knowledge in wellness and recovery; interacting systems of mind, brain, and body; as well as evidence-based integrated care interventions aimed at improving the wellbeing of low-income and vulnerable populations in the system of health and behavioral health care delivery.

**Social Work Practice with Military Families (SOWK 6055):** Examines the military environment within which military families function including culture, strengths, and stressors. A focus is placed on evidence-based and trauma informed strategies to intervene with military families at both the micro and macro levels of practice. Family life issues specific to military families including resources, policies, deployment realities, and the military context are explored.

**Social Work Practice with Service Members and Veterans (SOWK 6056):** Addresses the needs of active duty, retired, and deployed service members and veterans at different developmental phases of the military life, both holistically and within the context of their families and communities. A focus is placed on ways to help clients cope with a range of physical health, mental health, and psychosocial challenges including risk and protective factors associated with military life, deployments, and combat stressors. Theoretical and practical approaches to treatment of chronic stress, acute stress, and trauma related stress disorders are examined with the goal of advancing students' knowledge of best practices and current evidence-based models.

**School-Age Children and their Families (SOWK 6057):** Gives students the ability to use a wholistic trauma informed approach to work with school-age children and their families. Examines practice, ethical, and legal principles and procedures relevant to social work practice with families and children including juvenile delinquency, child protection, child adoption, education, and domestic relations. Requirements for school social work licensure in Colorado are also addressed.

**School Social Work Interventions (SOWK 6058):** Gives students the ability to identify, understand, and apply the varied roles of the school social worker. Uses a trauma informed lens to address prevention and intervention methods with children and youth at risk for school failure, as well as other behavioral and mental health problems. Also covers suicide assessment and prevention and the unique needs of school-age children. Requirements for endorsement as a school social work in Colorado are also addressed.

**Crisis Intervention (SOWK 6070).** Provides theoretical and practical knowledge regarding best practices when clients are presenting in crisis. Looks at crisis intervention from many perspectives, and how it manifests in many different practice settings. Examines micro (treatment of individuals who are in crisis), mezzo (such as Critical Incident Stress Debriefing), and macro (community responses to crises such as mobile crisis units, crisis hotlines, ACT teams, etc.) levels of crisis intervention. Provides special attention to the unique needs of children and adolescents who are in crisis. In addition, addresses special topics, including the crises of suicide, rape, and domestic violence, and crises associated with loss and grief (including crises experienced by caretakers and crises associated with the experience of divorce).

**Neuroscience for Social Work (SOWK 6071).** Looks at the applications of neuroscience in the field of Social Work. Reviews the basics of brain and nervous system physiology, including a review of the components of the brain, the functions of each region, brain plasticity, neurotransmitters, the fight flight-freeze responses, and the polyvagal theory. Includes a review of the neurobiological underpinnings of empathy, memory, attachment, and emotion, as well as childhood development, trauma, and addiction. Focuses on specific clinical applications of this knowledge when working with clients who have experienced trauma in its many forms.

**Forensic Social Work (SOWK 6072).** Provides an overview of social work practice in jails, prisons, parole/probation, and the legal system. Examines how psychosocial factors and forces of oppression impact people involved in the criminal justice system. Prepares students to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate practice with special populations affected by the criminal justice system including historically marginalized communities, people with chronic mental illness, pregnant women, the elderly, children and adolescents. Gives attention to: safety considerations, use of self in forensic social work, the intersections of privilege and oppression in forensic settings, and the role of locked facilities in society.

## **7. STUDENT SUPPORT**

### **Professional and Academic Advising Policy**

Professional and academic advising for MSW students is a primary responsibility of faculty, with support from the student services specialist. In general, questions about MSW program logistics are best addressed by the student services specialist. Logistics the student services specialist can assist with include changing course schedule, considering program of study options, dropping/adding courses, and completing graduation paperwork. Faculty advisors are full-time members of the faculty



who are experts in their fields. Faculty advisors can advise students on professional and academic issues such as appropriate electives, professional networking, portfolio planning, licensure preparation, and career planning. Students are encouraged to meet with their faculty advisor a minimum of one time per academic year but can meet more frequently if desired. Both faculty advisors and practicum faculty can help students consider the way different practicum placement options can support both academic and professional success. International students are additionally supported by the [International Affairs Office](#), which assists with other issues such as visa requirements.

## **Professional and Academic Advising Procedures**

Professional and academic advising for students in the MSW program are provided by social work faculty and staff. Upon admission to the MSW program, the social work student services specialist, who is a MSW trained social worker, meets with the student for an initial advising appointment to discuss tasks necessary to begin the first semester of academic study. During this meeting, the student receives both academic and professional advising. Academic advising functions include information about registration, program requirements, and preliminary degree planning. Professional advising functions include discussion about career planning, professional development opportunities, and electives that will help meet the student's academic and professional goals. Students who want additional professional and academic advising prior to the start of the program are encouraged to contact the MSW Program Director.

The faculty advisor is assigned during new student orientation, which generally occurs one week prior to the start of the semester. The faculty advisor is responsible for helping the student successfully navigate the MSW program and prepare for social work careers. Students may request that they be assigned a faculty advisor with expertise in a subspecialty in which they are interested, so that the faculty advisor may provide advice on appropriate electives and career planning. The academic advisor is always a full-time member of the MSW faculty. The major responsibilities of the academic advisor are to:

- Assist students in assessing their aptitude and suitability for a career in social work practice.
- Provide students with specific information about courses and program requirements.
- Advise on course planning in relation to the program's course requirements and the student's educational and professional goals.
- Consult with students as they prepare for practicum placement.
- Assist students in evaluating their progress and performance in the program.
- Advise students who experience class and practicum performance difficulties or other issues related to their professional education.
- Serve as a mentor to students as they enter the profession of social work (e.g., professional advising).

Students are informed about advising through a variety of means: 1) the advising policies and procedures are spelled out in the MSW student handbook, 2) the advising policies and procedures are discussed during orientation, and 3) faculty advisors are identified in the UCCS student portal.

Students are welcome to see their advisor anytime they have questions about the policies and procedures for advising.

Students meet with his/her/their faculty advisor at least one time per academic year for academic and professional advising. Academic advising functions include degree planning, course schedule review, assessment of progression toward graduation, electives that will help meet the student's academic and professional goals, and other academic advising matters unique to the individual student. Professional advising functions include discussion about career planning, professional development opportunities, connecting academic opportunities to professional goals, and other professional advising matters unique to the individual student.

## **Student Success**

UCCS, CPS, and the Social Work Programs value student success. Resources exist at both school and campus levels to assist students in many areas. Social Work faculty and staff are available to help match resources to needs. Social Work students who believe they need academic support are encouraged to reach out to their instructors and/or faculty advisor. All CPS students are invited and encouraged to attend professional development opportunities provided by the College of Public Service.

Many campus-level student resources exist. CPS works regularly with many of these resources, including:

- [The Office of Veteran and Military Student Affairs](#)
- [International Affairs Office](#)
- [UCCS Excel Centers](#)
- [Disability Services](#)
- [Multicultural Office for Student Access, Inclusiveness and Community \(MOSAIC\)](#)
- [Mental Health Services](#) in the Recreation and Wellness Center

Effective communication – written and verbal – is an important component of the MSW program. Fostering effective communication is part of our mission. The [Excel Writing Center](#) is a valuable partner in assisting students of all skill levels to become aware of personal idiosyncrasies and to improve writing ability. The [Excel Communication Center](#) offers presentation practice and feedback, tutoring for creating presentations, and facilitation for small groups. Students for whom English is a second language have additional communication resources available through the Global Engagement Office, and UCCS has an excellent English as a Second Language (ESL) program. Finally, MSW students typically work closely with the [CPS liaison in the Kraemer Family Library](#), who offers invaluable online or in person information sessions, tailored to individual research or other associated needs.

## **Career Resources**

UCCS maintains career resources and employment opportunities on its website. All students are welcome to contact the [UCCS Career Center](#) with questions about careers and future employment. Students are also encouraged to connect with us on Instagram, [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#) for ongoing notifications of potential interest.

## 8. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is available to support those students who would not be able to pursue the MSW without aid. The primary source of information about need-based student financial assistance as well as scholarships and other non-need-based aid is the [UCCS Office of Financial Aid, Student Employment and Scholarships](#). Additional information on financial assistance programs may be obtained through the [Graduate School](#).

Qualified students may receive assistance with various types of VA benefits through the [Office of Veteran and Military Student Affairs](#).

The College of Public Service offers scholarships and a limited number of graduate teaching or research assistantships to students. Scholarship opportunities specific to MSW students are announced to all College of Public Service students. Graduate assistantships, when available, are advertised through the Office of Financial Aid, Student Employment and Scholarships.

## 9. MSW GRADUATION PROCEDURES

All students graduating from the MSW program must apply for graduation by completing the steps outlined on the [Graduate School website](#). Do not procrastinate, as deadlines are early in the semester. Students who have completed all the requirements for the MSW degree can apply for candidacy and graduation in the fall, spring, or summer semesters. Students who complete their degree requirements in the summer may participate in graduation ceremonies in the fall. No graduation ceremony is held in the summer.

Students who are on the graduation list but find they are not able to complete the program requirements before graduation should notify the student services specialist as soon as possible. They may then reapply for graduation in a subsequent semester.

## 10. MSW ACADEMIC POLICIES

### Grading Policies

Grades offered in CPS courses, are based on an A to F scale, with each letter grade representing the following standard narrative description:

**A** = Work beyond the level of a typical graduate student; exemplary work. (An A equals 4 grade points, an A- equals 3.7 points; there is no A+ grade.)

**B** = Work typical of a graduate student; indicates student has attained the knowledge and skills intended for the course. (A B+ equals 3.3, a B equals 3.0, and a B- equals 2.7 points.)

**C** = Performance is below graduate-level expectations. (A C+ earns 2.3 grade points, a C yields 2.0).

**D** = Substandard performance in all aspects of the work of the course; inadequate comprehension of assigned reading material. (D equals 1.0 grade point).

**F** = Level of performance demonstrably below that expected of a graduate student; little or no indication that the student can succeed in a graduate program.

Please note that students must receive at least a B- in all courses applied to the MSW degree.

## **Grading Procedures**

Academic and professional performance is evaluated in social work courses including practicum courses. Criteria for evaluation of academic performance for each course are specified in the course syllabi.

## **Practicum Grading Policies**

Practicum courses grades are assigned by the instructor of record for the practicum course using the guidelines included in the syllabus. Information provided by the practicum instructor, the practicum liaison, and the student are considered in this process.

## **Practicum Grading Procedures**

Practicum courses are evaluated by the practicum instructors and the MSW Practicum Director. The instructor of record assigns the final grade. Practicum liaisons review progress mid-semester and assist the instructor and coordinator to identify any areas that need improvement. The learning plan outlines the specific tasks that will demonstrate each of the nine core competencies. The time log is used to keep track of both hours spent in the field and time spent working on tasks that relate to core competencies. Field competency evaluations are used to evaluate academic and professional performance of students in the nine core competencies and are factored into the final grade as outlined in the syllabus.

## **Standards of Performance Policies**

The calculation of a student's *overall* grade point average (GPA) shall be based on all coursework applied to the degree, including any courses taken as a non-degree seeking student. (NOTE: Courses taken in non-degree status are not included in the overall calculation of graduate school GPA on the official transcripts but are included in the overall calculation of GPA as conducted by CPS staff for graduation purposes.)

To be in good standing, students must have an overall GPA of 3.0 or better in all coursework. A grade of B- or better is required in all courses. The academic performance of each student will be reviewed at the end of each semester. A student who has a GPA of less than 3.0 will be placed on probation for a period of one year; additionally, any student receiving a grade of F in any course is automatically placed on probation. Any student on probation must meet with the MSW Program Director prior to registration.

After a student has been placed on probation, she/he/they have a maximum of two semesters, or one calendar year, to raise her/his/their GPA to 3.0. Failure to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 in the time period outlined will result in suspension from the program.

A suspended student is eligible to apply for readmission one year after removal from the program. Approval or rejection of this application rests with the MSW Program Director.

## **Standards of Performance Procedures**

The student's GPA is calculated by the UCCS Office of the Registrar and monitored by the UCCS Graduate School and the MSW Program. When a student falls below the 3.0 GPA required by the graduate school and/or received grade lower than a B- in a class, their information is flagged and notified by the UCCS Graduate School via e-mail. The MSW Program Director and/or the student's faculty advisor meets with them to discuss their pathway to success.

After a student has been placed on probation, she/he/they will meet with the MSW Program Director and/or the student's faculty advisor at least 1 time per semester in which the individual is on academic probation to discuss support mechanisms to improve academic success. All students on probation have a maximum of two semesters, or one calendar year, to raise her/his/their GPA to 3.0. Failure to raise the cumulative GPA to 3.0 in the time period outlined will result in suspension from the program.

## **Time Limit**

Master's degree students must complete all coursework and degree requirements within six years of registration in their first course. Exceptions must be approved in writing by the Dean of the College of Public Service and the Dean of the Graduate School.

## **Revalidation Process**

The Graduate School does not allow any course older than six years to be applied to a degree unless it has been revalidated by program faculty. The objective of course revalidation is to assure that the student's knowledge of course material is current.

On rare occasions, the MSW faculty will consider (but not guarantee) revalidation of a course completed more than 6 years but less than 9 years prior to graduation. It is the student's responsibility to make a cogent case for why the course material is applicable to the MSW degree and still current. The MSW Program Director and MSW faculty will review the request and determine if the course revalidation process is approved based on the materials provided.

In such cases, the following process apply.

1. Course revalidation will only be considered for courses in which at least a B- was earned.
2. Students will submit a Course Validation form (available from the student services specialist) for each course in question to the MSW Program Director.
3. The MSW Program Director will schedule a meeting to include the student and a second faculty member with content expertise related to the course in question. After that meeting, the MSW Program Director will notify the student if she/he/they are approved to continue the revalidation process.
4. If the student is approved to continue the process, she/he/they will submit to the MSW Program Director written review of what was learned in class, how the course applies to his/her/their profession, and what has changed in the field since the course was taken.

5. The MSW Program Director and/or a faculty content expert will conduct a second discussion with the student to discuss the paper and ask any additional questions needed to assess the currency of the student's knowledge.
6. The MSW Program Director will inform the student and the student services specialist of the decision on revalidating the course.

## **Incompletes, Withdrawals, and Repeating Courses**

### **Incompletes**

A grade of Incomplete may be granted when a student has successfully completed a substantial portion of the course (75% or more) *and* is prevented from completing the class by circumstances beyond his/her/their control. The course instructor has discretion as to whether to grant an Incomplete, and students should be aware that not all faculty will do so. If the instructor agrees to grant an Incomplete, the student must make arrangements to complete the remaining coursework with the original instructor within one year, although instructors may impose a shorter completion deadline at their discretion, which should be in writing. The student may not "sit in" on the class in subsequent semesters.

Once the coursework is completed, the instructor will change the I grade to a letter grade. The Incomplete notation will appear along with the final grade on the student's transcript. If the coursework is not completed within a year, the Incomplete will automatically change to an F. Incompletes for the capstone seminar are rarely granted and only in exceptional circumstances.

### **Drops and Withdrawals**

Deadlines for dropping a course are set by the Office of the Registrar and posted on the Academic Calendar each semester. Students are responsible for knowing the UCCS deadlines and procedures for dropping and adding courses.

Students will be allowed to drop and add of their own accord through census date (the 12th day of classes of the regular semester or the 6th day of classes of the summer term). Courses that meet less than the full 16-week term in fall and spring and 8 weeks in the summer have special pro-rated drop and add deadlines. Drop and add deadlines and UCCS guidelines are published in the [Course Information Center](#).

There are no refunds on individual courses dropped after the course census date.

Students must initiate a drop or withdrawal and follow the appropriate procedures. Students who fail to do this and do not complete the coursework will be issued a letter grade of "F" for the course.

### **Retroactive Grade Changes**

Students are not permitted to request grade changes for courses in which a final letter grade (other than an Incomplete) has been received except as a result of instructor error or as otherwise warranted through the academic grievance process. A student may not enter into an agreement with an instructor

to retroactively change a final letter grade based on work completed by the student after the course has ended.

### **Repeating Courses**

A student who receives a grade of B- or below in a course may repeat that course once, with the approval of the MSW Program Director, provided the course has not been previously applied toward a degree. The grade received in a repeated course may substitute for the original grade and only the latter grade will be used in calculating the graduate program GPA required for graduation. However, all grades received during the student's graduate school experience will appear on the student's transcript and will be used in calculating the student's University GPA. These and other UCCS Graduate School policies may apply.

## **Minor Children Prohibited in Classroom and Practicum Placement Sites**

### **Policy**

Minor children are prohibited in all social work classrooms (including virtual classrooms), program activities, and field placement sites. On rare occasions, minor children may participate in classroom, program activities, and/or practicum placement activities when appropriate and approved by the lead instructor.

### **Rationale**

Social work courses address sensitive topics including, but not limited to, violence, response to violence, and trauma. These subjects are challenging for people to process and inappropriate for children. It is difficult for students to discuss these topics among other adults, let alone in a discussion setting with minors in attendance. The inability to discuss key issues is a disruption to critical classroom activity.

### **Resources**

The UCCS Family Development Center has childcare opportunities. Students needing accommodations may work directly with the Office of Disability Services.

## **Student Academic Ethics Code Policy**

All students enrolled in credit or non-credit courses at UCCS are bound by the UCCS Student Academic Ethics Code Policy and the UCCS Student Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Student Code of Conduct is to maintain the general welfare of the university community. The university strives to make the campus community a place of study, work, and residence where people are treated, and treat one another, with respect and courtesy.

The following information in italics is taken directly from the policy.

Any individual who has a good faith belief that a Code violation has taken place should immediately report the circumstances to the faculty member of the course involved or to the Program Director/chair of the department where the course is offered.

If a faculty member has reason to believe that a Code violation has occurred (due either to the faculty member's own observation or due to a report by a third party), the faculty member shall discuss the matter with the student, provide the student with the supporting documentation and ask the student for a response.

If the student admits to the Code violation or the faculty member finds that a Code violation has occurred, then it is the faculty member's prerogative to impose a sanction at the course level. Such sanctions may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) downgrading the student on the assignment/exam/activity in which the academic Code violation occurred, with or without the opportunity to redo
- b) failing the student on the assignment/exam/activity in which the academic Code violation occurred, with or without the opportunity to redo
- c) lowering the student's grade for the course
- d) failing the student for the course.

If the faculty member believes that a sanction more severe than a course-level sanction should be levied, then the faculty member shall follow all department and college procedures for such sanctions. The Program Director or Dean may levy more severe sanctions including probation, suspension, expulsion, or withholding or revoking a degree.

### **Student Academic Ethics Code Dispute Procedures**

Students may dispute the faculty member's finding that a Code violation has occurred by following the appeals process outlined below. Students may not appeal course-level sanctions.

#### **Step One: Filing the Appeal**

If the student contends that they are innocent of a Code violation and are unable to resolve the situation with the faculty member(s), they should file a written appeal with the MSW Program Director. Absent unusual circumstances, the appeal should be filed within 30 days after the dispute.

The written appeal may be filed via e-mail or delivered directly to the MSW Program Director. The appeal should contain all relevant information.

#### **Step Two: Investigating the Appeal**

The MSW Program Director will acknowledge receipt of the appeal, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin an investigation. They may request additional information from the student and faculty member(s) involved.

In the event that the MSW Program Director is involved in the dispute, they shall refer the investigation of the appeal to the assistant Dean of the College of Public Service for investigation.

#### **Step Three: Decision by the MSW Program Director**

Within 30 days of the filing of the appeal, the MSW Program Director shall provide a written report containing their decision to the student and the faculty member(s).



### **Appealing the Decision of the MSW Program Director to the Associate Dean**

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MSW Program Director, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 days of notification of the Program Director's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Associate Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MSW Program Director in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 days of receiving the student's appeal of the Program Director's decision, the assistant Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the appeal to the student, the faculty member(s), and the MSW Program Director.

### **Appealing the Decision of the Associate Dean to the Dean**

If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MSW Program Director and the assistant Dean, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 days of notification of the assistant Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified above. The Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MSW Program Director and Associate Dean in deciding the disposition of the appeal, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 days of receiving the student's appeal of the Associate Dean's decision, the Dean shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all of the parties involved.

### **Campus-Level Appeals**

Students may dispute the faculty member's finding that a Code violation has occurred at the campus level only after exhausting the CPS appeals process. Students may not appeal course-level sanctions but may appeal more severe program- or School-level sanctions such as probation, suspension, expulsion, or withholding or revoking of a degree as levied by the College. This process is outlined in the Student Academic Ethics Code Policy.

## **Student Academic Complaints and Appeals**

Formal procedures by which a currently enrolled student may seek to remedy academic and/or professional complaints within the College of Public Service are described below. Student appeals are challenges to academic actions or decisions, including but not limited to actions such as an academic grade or evaluation of a student's work in a course, seminar, or other academic forum; a decision with respect to a student's academic standing in a program or at the School; unjust treatment by a faculty member in a class; or actions related to thesis or culminating experience procedures.

***Step One: Informal Resolution:*** The student is strongly encouraged to first attempt to informally resolve the grievance through discussion with the faculty member(s) involved.

***Step Two: Filing the Grievance:*** If the student is unable to resolve the dispute with the faculty member(s), he or she should file a written grievance with the MSW Program Director. Absent unusual circumstances, the grievance should be filed within 30 days after the student learns of the event that gives rise to the grievance.

- The written grievance may be filed via e-mail or delivered directly to the MSW Program Director. The grievance should clearly state the basis for the complaint and the remedy requested, and

should include any evidence that supports the grievance, such as class syllabi, assignments, and statements from other students.

- Students should be aware that grades and other evaluations of student work are traditionally within the jurisdiction of individual instructors and are not likely to be changed absent evidence that the faculty member 1) determined the grade based on considerations other than student performance; 2) substantially differed from previously announced criteria or procedures in determining the grade; or 3) violated university or school policy in determining the grade. The student bears the burden of proof on these allegations.

***Step Three: Investigating the Grievance:*** The MSW Program Director will acknowledge receipt of the grievance, forward a copy to the faculty member(s) involved, and begin the investigation of the circumstances of the grievance. They may request additional information from the student and faculty member(s) involved.

- If the grievance involves the need for substantial academic expertise in a particular field to assess whether there is a basis for the grievance, the Program Director may appoint a panel of faculty members with expertise in the area to investigate the grievance and recommend a decision to the Program Director.
- If the MSW Program Director or Social Work Chair is involved in the grievance, they shall refer the investigation of the grievance to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service for investigation pursuant to the rules of the Graduate School.

***Step Four: Decision by the MSW Program Director:*** Within 30 days of the filing of the grievance, the MSW Program Director shall provide a written report containing their decision on the disposition of the grievance to the student and the faculty member(s).

Complaints or concerns about an instructor brought to the program director or appropriate level of administrator during the semester will be considered; however, grade disputes will only be addressed after the semester grade is posted.

**Appealing the Decision of the MSW Program Director to the Associate Dean:** If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MSW Program Director, the student may appeal to the Associate Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 days of notification of the Program Director's decision, following the same procedure specified in Step Two above. The Associate Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MSW Program Director in deciding the disposition of the grievance, and any other materials they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 days of receiving the student's appeal of the Program Director's decision, the Assistant Dean shall provide a written report containing his/her/their decision on the disposition of the grievance to the student, the faculty member(s), and the MSW Program Director.

**Appealing the Decision of the Associate Dean to the Dean:** If a student is not satisfied with the results of the appeal process to the MSW Program Director and the Associate Dean, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Public Service within 14 days of notification of the Associate Dean's decision, following the same procedure specified in Step Two above. The Dean shall then review the materials submitted by the student, the materials submitted to and used by the MSW

Program Director and Associate Dean in deciding the disposition of the grievance, and any other materials she/he/they consider relevant to the inquiry. Within 14 days of receiving the student's appeal of the Associate Dean's decision, the Dean shall provide a written report containing his/her/their decision on the disposition of the grievance to all the parties involved.

**Campus-Level Appeals:** Grade appeals are decided within the College of Public Service; the Dean has final jurisdiction. If a resolution to the problem identified in the student's appeal on other academic issues cannot be reached on the department or School level, the student may submit a written appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School according to Article VI of Graduate School Policies and Procedures.

Student Notification: Students are notified about these procedures in the UCCS Graduate Catalog, the Dean of Students website, and the MSW Student Handbook.

## **Social Work Ethical Standards Policy**

Students can be dismissed from the MSW program for various infractions that constitute ethical breaches. These behaviors / choices can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program. The following list of behaviors presents some of the most important of these infractions but is not, in itself, exhaustive:

1. Documented behavior that is inconsistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers;
2. Documented problems in behavior or performance, which raise questions from the faculty or practicum instructor about the student's suitability for professional social work. The following list is not exhaustive:
  - a. Forced or coerced sexual behavior;
  - b. Sexual activity with clients including, but not limited to, kissing, fondling, or sexual intercourse;
  - c. Physical actions, such as hitting, spanking, or slapping, directed at clients, students, faculty, or staff;
  - d. Physical or emotional threats directed toward clients, students, faculty, or staff.
  - e. Acceptance of clients' gifts or money that are not considered standard payment for services received on behalf of the student's agency or field setting; students shall not ask for nor communicate an expectation of gifts from clients;
  - f. Illegal or unethical behavior that limits or takes away clients' rights, that results in financial, material, or emotional loss for clients, or that results in financial, material, or emotional gain for social work students; and g. Sexual harassment.
3. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty or disruption;
4. Failure of student to maintain a 3.0 GPA beyond one semester of academic probation; and
5. Failure to follow policies and rules as outlined in the MSW Student Handbook or as outlined in the MSW Practicum Manual.
6. Dispute policy is included in this handbook under the section Termination of Enrollment Due to Ethical Breaches.

# **Ethical Use of A.I.**

## **Acceptable Uses**

AI may be employed for brainstorming and refining ideas, Fine tuning your research questions, Finding information on your topic, Drafting an outline to organize your thoughts, and Checking grammar and style ([https://frc.uccs.edu/teaching\\_resources/ai\\_in\\_academics](https://frc.uccs.edu/teaching_resources/ai_in_academics))

## **Unacceptable Uses**

Impersonating you in classroom contexts, such as by using the tool to compose discussion board replies or content that you put into a Teams or Zoom chat. Completing groupwork that your group has assigned to you, unless it is mutually agreed upon that you may utilize the tool. Writing a draft of a writing assignment. Writing entire sentences, paragraphs, or papers to complete class assignments.

## **Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for understanding the academic code of conduct as it is described at the University, College, Department and course levels. University code of conduct policies can be found here: <https://dos.uccs.edu/student-conduct>

- Any use of AI must be disclosed, and the extent of its use clearly stated.
- All AI-assisted work must be critically reviewed and revised by the student to ensure understanding, accuracy and originality.

## **Reporting and Consequences.**

Violations of this policy should be reported through the honor code violations reporting system at UCCS which details the nature of the violation, student acknowledgment of the violation, the course level sanction (if any) and whether the violation was referred to CPS for a larger sanction.

- Students will be notified if a violation report is submitted. Please see the University code of conduct policies above (under IV.a.) for more information and resources.
- Sanctions for violations may include a failing grade for the assignment, failure of the course, academic probation, suspension, or expulsion.

## **Commitment to Integrity**

All members of the UCCS community are expected to maintain and encourage high standards of academic integrity, respecting the principles set forth in this policy.

## **Procedures for Addressing Alleged Ethical Breaches**

Concerns about alleged unethical behavior will be addressed by the MSW program committee. If the alleged unethical behavior occurs in regard to academic coursework other than practicum placement, the program retention committee will consist of the student's advisor, the classroom instructor, and one additional faculty member. If the unethical behavior occurs in regard to practicum placement, the program retention committee will consist of: the student's advisor, the MSW Director, the MSW practicum coordinator, and the practicum liaison. If the alleged unethical behavior occurs in regard to a student organization event, the program retention committee will consist of: the student's advisor, the faculty liaison to the student organization, and another faculty member.

The program retention committee will review oral and written reports of the student's alleged unethical behavior. The student will be given the opportunity to address the committee. The committee will deliberate and decide whether to dismiss the student or not. If a decision is made to dismiss, the student will be given a letter explaining the rationale behind the decision. Students who wish to appeal the decision to terminate must first write a letter of appeal to the Social Work chair. If the dispute is not resolved by the Social Work chair, students must follow the Graduate School procedures outlined by the Dean of Students guide for Student Conduct.

Students are notified about these procedures in the UCCS Graduate Catalog, the Dean of Students website, and the MSW Student Handbook.

### **Response to Significant Situations or Events**

UCCS has a number of response mechanisms in place to respond to student crisis situations, or to incidents or behaviors involving students that threaten the quality of campus life. Crisis situations may be accidental, occur without warning, or be intentional and meant to cause harm to students or the campus community.

The CARE (Campus Assessment Response and Evaluation) Team will assess and coordinate responses to significant campus situations and events involving University of Colorado Colorado Springs (UCCS) students, which require intervention in order to assist the community and its members to return to a more homeostatic state of functioning. These events may include death or significant trauma, problematic student situations involving medical or psychological concerns, and campus emergency situations that directly affect the well-being of students.

The CARE Team has the authority to respond and coordinate intervention to all student crisis incidents with the concurrence of the Chancellor. Issues of inappropriate student conduct are referred to the Office of the Dean of Students. Allegations of criminal wrong doing will be referred to Public Safety. Allegations of sexual harassment and/or discrimination shall be referred to the Office of Institutional Equity in accordance with university policy.

The CARE Team will confer and/or convene to respond to patterns or instances of dysfunctional behavior, and questions, concerns, and inquiries concerning student behavior. They will facilitate a coordinated campus response to crisis incidents, threats or potential threats that may affect the wellbeing of students, campus, or broader community. Coordinated responses may include, but are not limited to, identification of and referral to appropriate support services and resources on- or off campus; informal resolution measures such as mediation; facilitated dialogue between parties involved; discussions in residence halls or at other campus locations, campus notices and fact sharing; and promotion of wider educational awareness, prevention, and outreach.

Please refer to the CARE Team website for referrals and additional information:  
<https://www.uccs.edu/dos/care>.

Standards for student conduct, including the UCCS Student Classroom/Course-Related Behavior

Policy may be found under the Dean of Students - Student Conduct. Faculty members are authorized to exclude disruptive students from the classroom or other academic sites. Upon exclusion, it is incumbent on the student to make every reasonable effort to resolve the matter with the faculty member involved. If the student and faculty member cannot resolve the matter, either may request mediation by the MSW Program Director. If the excluded student cannot resolve the matter satisfactorily per the procedures outlined here and enumerated in the UCCS Student Classroom/Course-Related Behavior Policy, the student may request that the Dean of students review the matter and may continue with the appeal process as put forth in that policy.

## **Students' Rights and Responsibilities to Participate in Academic and Student Affairs Policymaking**

The UCCS MSW program offers a variety of opportunities for MSW students to organize around their interests and the right to participate in formulating and modifying policies that affect academic and student affairs. A few of the opportunities include the UCCS Social Work Club and, for those with high academic achievement, Phi Alpha Honor Society. Other opportunities exist within the College of Public Service, the UCCS community, and through the National Association of Social Workers. The UCCS MSW program shall also solicit and act upon student feedback about program policies, curriculum design, and scheduling. In applicable cases, student feedback will be solicited using formal evaluations, student feedback, and other mechanisms appropriate to the situation.

With the opportunities and rights outlined above, MSW students also have the responsibility to exercise these opportunities and rights by utilizing available UCCS, CPS, and Social Work services and resources, including advisement, scholar life, and engagement. Student feedback can only be useful when it is provided to the social work program through appropriate mechanisms. Thus, students have a responsibility to participate in a professional manner when asked to do so. Students are also encouraged to actively participate on the new faculty search process meeting and providing feedback about faculty candidates.

## **Student Organizations**

UCCS Social Work students have a right and responsibility to participate in student organizations including Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society, the UCCS Social Work Club, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), and other organizations at UCCS. For more information about these organizations, please contact the following.

- Social Work Advisory Committee: Contact Dr. Monica Furey at [mpeloso@uccs.edu](mailto:mpeloso@uccs.edu) or Dr. Shannon Johnson at [sjohns36@uccs.edu](mailto:sjohns36@uccs.edu)
- Phi Alpha Social Work Honor Society: Contact Drs. Shannon Johnson ([sjohns36@uccs.edu](mailto:sjohns36@uccs.edu)) or Arlene Bjugstad, ([bjudgsta@uccs.edu](mailto:bjudgsta@uccs.edu)), Phi Alpha Faculty Advisors
- UCCS Social Work Club: Contact Dr. Monica Furey, Faculty Advisor at [mpeloso@uccs.edu](mailto:mpeloso@uccs.edu)
- Student Voice and Choice Committee: Contact Dr. Billie Ratliff at [bratliff@uccs.edu](mailto:bratliff@uccs.edu)
- NASW CO: Contact the organization at <https://naswco.socialworkers.org/>
- UCCS Student Organizations: Contact student life at <https://studentlife.uccs.edu/clubresources>