



**BE BOLD. Shape the Future.  
School of Social Work**

New Mexico State University Master of Social Work (MSW)  
Student Handbook

2022-2023



**A Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Accredited Program Since 1991**

**<https://socialwork.nmsu.edu/>**

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## OVERVIEW

### New Mexico State University's School of Social Work

The School of Social Work (SSW) at New Mexico State University (NMSU) is located within the College of Health, Education and Social Transformation (HEST). The SSW offers the Master of Social Work (MSW) program both online and in person in Las Cruces, New Mexico. Four degree pathways for the MSW Program are offered, a one-year and two-year Advanced Standing program for BSW-prepared and qualifying students, and regular two- and three-year courses of study. Courses are offered through a combination of face-to-face (F2F), hybrid classes (F2F/web-based synchronous), and some online asynchronous courses. Finally, NMSU offers a dual Master of Public Health (MPH) and MSW degree program, accomplished over three years.

Our MSW program is an advanced generalist program, robustly preparing our students for clinical, organizational, community, policy and research practice. The curriculum incorporates the foundational competencies defined by the Council on Social Work Education. uses the foundation competencies developed by CSWE. The educational model upon which the program is built proposes that there are two levels of social work education, advanced generalist foundation and concentration. A common core of social work values, knowledge and methods unifies practice at both levels. This core is based on a liberal arts education and draws heavily from the social sciences. All programs of the SSW are accredited by CSWE.

### Mission and Goals

The mission of the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at New Mexico State University is: “to prepare graduates to **promote human and social well-being** through ethical, theoretically based and evidence informed advanced generalist **social work practice**, with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities in the culturally diverse environment of the Southwest, the United States, and the world. **The MSW program is committed to serving people impacted by poverty and oppression through the promotion of empowerment, cultural humility and competence, and social and economic justice.**”

The specific goals of the MSW Program are:

1. To prepare graduates for advanced generalist social work practice that is responsive to rapidly changing environments.
2. To prepare graduates for multidimensional social work practice through the integration of theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, and professional experience.
3. To prepare graduates who are committed to social justice and to ethical practice in complex settings.
4. To prepare graduates who are committed to continuing their professional development, developing autonomy and leadership within practice settings, and contributing to the knowledge and skill base of the profession.
5. To prepare graduates **who employ a strengths-based, culturally humble approach to practice** with populations and communities of the Southwest.

### Focus

The MSW program has an Advanced Generalist focus. This collaborative practice approach promotes skills and knowledge for focused interventions with individuals, groups, families, neighborhoods, communities, organizations and public policies. The MSW program is founded on the use of critical thinking skills and differential application of advanced social work knowledge, theories, skills, values and ethics in the assessment of and intervention with micro, mezzo, and macro level systems. The Advanced Generalist year prepares social work practitioners to exercise professional autonomy, leadership, and creativity necessary for multidimensional contextual and ethical practice in rapidly changing social environments with populations of the southwest and beyond.

## **History**

In 1969, NMSU began offering baccalaureate courses in social welfare. In 1972, with the help of Dr. Corinne Wolfe and a Section 707 grant, the university developed a Baccalaureate Social Work (BSW) program within the Sociology and Anthropology Department. In 1975, the BSW program was accredited by the CSWE, and in 1980, Social Work became a separate academic department. The move to departmental status was part of an overall university reorganization that created the College of Human and Community Services, now known as the CHSS.

Responding to national, regional and state needs, in 1990, NMSU and the State of New Mexico implemented the MSW program. Some of the statewide needs that prompted this move included the professionalization of public child welfare services created through Federal Court Orders and social work licensure. State agencies were in dire need of practitioners with advanced skills in working with families in multicultural settings. The SSW and its faculty continued to play a prominent role in meeting unique and emerging social service needs. In 1999, the department received status as a *School* within the College of Health and Social Services. In 2008, the SSW changed its curriculum's focus from Family Centered Practice in Multi-Cultural Settings to Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice. This change sparked a new curriculum with an emphasis on competency-based social work education across all levels of client systems – from individuals to families, groups, organizations, and communities.

## **Master of Social Work Program Options**

The MSW program is composed of a Foundation Generalist year of 30 credit hours and an Advanced Generalist year of an additional 30 credit hours. The regular MSW program is completed following either the two-year or the three-year degree plan. Students who have BSW degrees and a GPA of 3.5 or above are eligible to apply for the advanced standing degree plan and enter the MSW program at the beginning of the Advanced Generalist year.

**Students who are entering the Advanced Standing, one-year program, or the regular two-year program are required to contact the Practicum Education Team immediately upon admission to start their practicum placement process. For more information, please see the Practicum Education Handbook.**

## **NMSU Site-Based MSW Program**

The SSW offers the MSW program in Las Cruces at NMSU's main campus. All four degree pathways are offered through the site-based program. Also, the dual Masters in Public Health and Social Work three year program is offered. Courses are delivered through a combination of FTF classes, hybrid FTF and online coursework, and asynchronous classes.

## **NMSU-O MSW Program**

The online only program will deliver all courses online using the Canvas learning management system and Zoom technology. Courses can either be synchronous (requiring the class to meet online on certain dates and time) or asynchronous (no requirement to meet online). All four degree pathways and the dual Masters in Public Health and Social Work three year program are offered through the online MSW program.

## **MSW CURRICULUM**

Social work education is built on two integrated components: classroom education and practicum education. The curriculum is organized into content areas: social work practice courses; practicum courses; and, theory courses, such as Sociocultural Concepts of Social Work in the U.S. Southwest, Human Behavior & the Social Environment, Policy, and Research. Courses in each of these areas are taught at both the Foundation (Generalist) level and Advanced Generalist level.

### **Social Work Competencies**

In accordance with the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the SSW follows the Educational Competencies as described in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS 2015). These Core Competencies are:

1. Demonstrate ethical and professional behavior
2. Engage diversity and difference in practice
3. Advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice
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

Within each competency are the following practice dimensions: knowledge, skills, values, cognitive processes/critical thinking, and affective processes. These practice dimensions help connect the practice behaviors used to measure student competency to the core competencies provided by CSWE. Every course syllabus shows the linkages between course objectives, learning objectives, assignments, and the practice behaviors they measure.

### **Foundation Year: Generalist Social Work Practice**

The purpose of the generalist curricula is to provide the foundation that distinguishes social work from other helping professions. The School of Social Work (SSW) definition of generalist practice, as defined by the SSW faculty, is below:

Generalist social work practitioners work with individuals, families, groups, communities and organizations in a variety of social work and host settings and apply ethical principles and critical thinking to practice. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and is grounded in the dual perspective of the person and the environment. Utilizing knowledge of the human condition, generalist practitioners view clients and client systems from a strengths and resiliency perspective to recognize, support, and build upon the capabilities of all human beings. They use a collaborative process to engage, assess broker services, advocate, counsel, educate, and organize with and on behalf of clients and client systems. In addition, they participate in community and organizational development. Generalist practitioners are consumer informed, are involved in research-informed (evidence based) practice and evaluate service outcomes to continually improve the provision and quality of services most appropriate to client needs. Finally, generalist social work practice is guided by the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics (current year) incorporating diversity in their practice and advocating for human rights and social justice.

### **Advanced Year: Advanced Generalist Social Work Practice**

The NMSU MSW program prepares students from an Advanced Generalist perspective. The program is founded on the use of critical thinking skills, values, ethics and differential application of advanced social work knowledge, theories and skills in the assessment of, and intervention with, micro, mezzo, and macro level client systems. The SSW definition of Advanced Generalist perspective, as defined by the SSW faculty, follows:

The advanced generalist perspective prepares practitioners to exercise the professional autonomy, leadership, and creativity necessary for multidimensional contextual and ethical practice in rapidly changing social environments with populations of the southwest. As students move to work with more complex clients, issues, problems, theories and interventions, the scope and depth of their professional preparation increases.

### **Practicum Education**

The Practicum Education program within the SSW integrates classroom study with practice with Individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. For more information on practicum education, please refer to the Practicum Education Student Handbook.

### **Dual MSW/MPH Degree Program**

The SSW and the Department of Public Health Science (PHS) partner to offer a dual MSW/MPH degree program. The dual MPH/MSH degree program can be completed with a total of 90 credit hours.

Public health social work is a highly marketable subdiscipline within the two professions, with its practitioners skilled to address social determinants and of health/behavioral health and structural inequities disproportionately impacting Black, Indigenous and People of Color. While our social work program prepares students for culturally humble practice with individuals, groups and communities at micro, mezzo and macro levels, public health focuses on population- and community-level practice utilizing epidemiology. Both disciplines center culturally relevant approaches and prepare students for research and policy practice. Finally, students interested in international practice find this dual degree pathway highly beneficial in addressing global issues of health and behavioral health. To learn more about public health social work practice, see: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1524839919886284>.

Students interested in pursuing the dual degree program must:

1. Be admitted as a dual student in both programs.
2. Complete all course requirements in the dual MPH/MSW degree plan/pathway.
3. Complete a capstone requirement (graduate competency examination) for each of the two programs during their final Spring semester.

### **MSW Degree Plans/Pathways**

Graduate students should take into consideration any outside workload and commitments in planning their course load. The maximum credits that a graduate student may take in any semester is 15 but may be increased with approval based on a student's degree pathway. During a six-week summer session, the maximum is 6 credits. Students following the one-year advanced standing or two-year degree pathway will have four academic courses each semester and a practicum. Anticipate a minimum of 12 hours per week in courses, 4-6 hours per week completing readings and coursework and 16-20 hours per week at a practicum. Students following the two-year advanced standing or three-year pathway take three to four academic courses and in their last two years will also spend 16-20 hours per week in practicum. Given these demands, we strongly encourage students to please consider the best degree path that promotes their wellbeing and academic success, while recognizing it may be difficult to work a full-time position (40 hours/week).

### **Course and Program Withdrawal**

The academic calendar with important deadlines for students is located at <https://records.nmsu.edu/faculty-and-staff/academic-calendar.html>. Please consult with the MSW Coordinator and review <https://uar.nmsu.edu/refunds/withdrawals.html> for information on the process for withdrawing from coursework or the university.

Students may withdraw from social work courses during the period in which withdrawals are permitted by NMSU policy. However, students are encouraged to work with the SSW Academic Advisor and MSW Program Coordinator when dropping or withdrawing from a course for the following reasons:

1. Because the MSW curriculum is designed to build knowledge and skills progressively, dropping or withdrawing from a course may require a student to wait one full academic year to complete that course.
2. Dropping or withdrawing from courses that are prerequisites may mean students are not able to progress in their degrees until they have met these requirements.

3. Dropping or withdrawing from courses that are corequisites (meaning they must be taken at the same time as other courses, such as practicum) may require students to withdraw from those courses as well.
4. Dropping or withdrawing from courses will likely delay completion of the program.

### **Credit for Life or Work Experience**

The MSW Program at NMSU does not grant academic credit for life or work experience in lieu of social work courses, including practicum courses.

### **Changing Degree Pathways/Plans**

Students who wish to change their degree pathways/plans must first discuss this with the SSW Academic Advisor and the MSW Program Coordinator. The MSW Program Coordinator must review and approve the proposed changes before the student alters their courses.

### **Transferring Between Site-Based and Online Programs**

Students who experience an unanticipated change in their situation which might require them to move between site-based programs, from site-based to online, or from online to site-based may petition the department for approval to change programs. Petitions to change in the fall must be received by March 30 of the previous spring semester and petitions to change in the spring must be received by October 30 of the previous fall. Petitions will be approved in situations of documented need and in which there is adequate space in the desired program.

### **Degree Pathways/Plans**

All degree pathways/plans offered by the SSW MSW Program are provided here.



<b>One-Year Advanced Standing MSW Degree Pathway/Plan</b>	
<b>Advanced Generalist Foundation</b>	
<b>Year One Fall Semester</b>	<b>Credits</b>
SOWK 5250 Policy Analysis & Change	3
SOWK 5320 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 5330 Advanced Practice with Groups	3
SOWK 5310 Advanced Social Work Mental Health Practice	3
SOWK 5280 Advanced Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
<b>Year One Spring Semester</b>	
SOWK 5340 Practice V: Advanced Practice with Families	3
SOWK 5350 Practice VI: Advanced Practice with Organizations and Communities	3
SOWK 5220 Social Work Research II	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	3
SOWK 5290 Advanced Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
	<b>TOT 30</b>
	<b>AL credits</b>

<b>Two-Year Advanced Standing MSW Degree Pathway/Plan</b>	
<b>Year One Fall Semester</b>	
SOWK 5250 Policy Analysis and Change	3
SOWK 5310 Advanced Social Work Mental Health Practice	<u>3</u>
	<b>6</b>
<b>Year One Spring Semester</b>	
SOWK 5220 Social Work Research II	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	<u>3</u>
	<b>6</b>
<b>Year Two Fall Semester</b>	
SOWK 5320 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 5330 Advanced Practice with Groups	3
SOWK 5280 Advanced Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two Spring Semester</b>	
SOWK 5340 Advanced Practice with Families	3
SOWK 5350 Advanced Practice with Organizations & Communities	3
SOWK 5290 Advanced Practicum Experience II	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
	<b>TOTAL 30</b>

<b>Two-Year MSW Degree Pathway/Plan</b>	
<b>Generalist Foundation</b>	
<b>Year One Fall Semester</b>	<b>Credits</b>
SOWK 5110 Socio-cultural Concepts and Populations of the Southwest	3
SOWK 5130 Human Behavior and Social Environment I	3
SOWK 5160 Generalist Social Work Practice I	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	3
SOWK 5180 Generalist Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
<b>Year One Spring Semester</b>	
SOWK 5150 Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy	3
SOWK 5140 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SOWK 5170 Generalist Social Work Practice II	3
SOWK 5120 Social Work Research I	3
SOWK 5190 Generalist Practicum Experience II	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
<b>Advanced Generalist Concentration</b>	
<b>Year Two Fall Semester</b>	3
SOWK 5250 Policy Analysis & Change	3
SOWK 5320 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 5330 Advanced Practice with Groups	3
SOWK 5310 Advanced Social Work Mental Health Practice	3
SOWK 5280 Advanced Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
<b>Year Two Spring Semester</b>	
SOWK 5340 Advanced Practice with Families	3
SOWK 5350 Advanced Practice with Organizations and Communities	3
SOWK 5220 Social Work Research II	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	3
SOWK 5290 Advanced Practicum Experience II	<u>3</u>
	<b>15</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60 credits</b>

<b>Three-Year MSW Degree Pathway/Plan</b>	
<b>Generalist Foundation</b>	
<b>Year One <i>Fall Semester</i></b>	<b>Credits</b>
SOWK 5110 Sociocultural Concepts and Populations of the Southwest	3
SOWK 5130 Human Behavior and Social Environment I	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
<b>Year One <i>Spring Semester</i></b>	3
SOWK 5150 Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy	3
SOWK 5140 Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SOWK 5120 Social Work Research I	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two <i>Fall Semester</i></b>	
SOWK 5250 Policy Analysis & Change	3
SOWK 5160 Generalist Social Work Practice I	3
SOWK 5180 Generalist Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
<b>Year Two <i>Spring Semester</i></b>	
SOWK 5170 Social Work Practice II	3
SOWK or Related Graduate Elective*	3
SOWK 5190 Generalist Practicum Experience II	<u>3</u>
	<b>9</b>
<b>Advanced Generalist Concentration</b>	
<b>Year Three <i>Fall Semester</i></b>	3
SOWK 5320 Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 5330 Advanced Practice with Groups	3
SOWK 5310 Advanced Social Work Mental Health Practice	3
SOWK 5280 Advanced Practicum Experience I	<u>3</u>
	<b>12</b>
<b>Year Three <i>Spring Semester</i></b>	
SOWK 5340 Advanced Practice with Families	3
SOWK 5350 Advanced Practice with Organizations and Communities	3
SOWK 5220 Social Work Research II	3
SOWK 5290 Advanced Practicum Experience II	<u>3</u>
	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>60 credits</b>

<b>Dual MPH/MSW Degree Plan</b>	<b>Credits</b>
<b>Summer Pre-Session (Optional to Replace Courses in Future Semesters, as available)</b>	<b>6 Credits</b>
SOWK 5150 - Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy	3
SOWK 5110 - Sociocultural Concepts and Populations of the Southwest	3
<b>Fall, 1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	<b>15 Credits</b>
SOWK 5110 - Sociocultural Concepts and Populations of the Southwest	3
SOWK 5130 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3
MPH 510 - Community and Psychosocial Aspects of Public Health	3
MPH 520 - Biostatistic Applications in Public Health	3
MPH 540 - Public Health Services	3
<b>Spring, 1<sup>st</sup> Year</b>	<b>15 Credits</b>
SOWK 5150 - Social Problems and Social Welfare Policy	3
MPH 530 - Epidemiological Approaches to Disease Control and Prevention	3
MPH 56X - Cultural Foundations Course	3
MPH 570 - Foundations of Public Health Education	3
MPH 572 - Techniques in Health Communication and Education	3
<b>Summer, 1<sup>st</sup> Year (Optional to Replace Course in Future Semester, as available)</b>	<b>3 Credits</b>
SOWK 5250 - Policy Analysis and Change	3
<b>Fall, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	<b>12 Credits</b>
SOWK 5160 - Generalist Social Work Practice I	3
SOWK 5310 - Advanced Social Work Mental Health Practice	3
SOWK 5180 - Generalist Practicum Experience I	3
MPH 574 - Program Planning	3
<b>Spring, 2<sup>nd</sup> Year</b>	<b>15 Credits</b>
SOWK 5250 - Policy Analysis and Change	3
SOWK 5140 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3
SOWK 5170 - Generalist Social Work Practice II	3
SOWK 5190 -Generalist Practicum Experience II	3
MPH 579 - Research Resources	3
<b>Summer, 2nd Year (Mandatory)</b>	<b>3 Credits</b>
MPH 596 - Public Health Field Experience	3
<b>Fall, 3<sup>rd</sup> year</b>	<b>15 Credits</b>
SOWK 5320 - Advanced Practice with Individuals	3
SOWK 5330 - Advanced Practice with Groups	3
SOWK 5280 - Advanced Generalist Field Experience I	3
MPH 573 - Community Organizing in Public Health	3
MPH 578 – Evaluation	3
<b>Spring, 3<sup>st</sup> Year**</b>	<b>15 Credits</b>
SOWK 5340 - Advanced Practice with Families	3
SOWK 5350 - Advanced Practice with Organizations and Communities	3
MPH 550 - Environmental Health	3
SOWK 5290 - Advanced Practicum Experience II	3
SOWK 5999 - Capstone in Leadership in Public Health Social Work	3
<b>**SOWK 5220 is waived by taking MPH 520 and 530 [Epi and Biostats]</b>	<b>90</b>

## NMSU Student Resources

Here are important resources for you as you begin your MSW Program! Please also feel free to connect with the MSW Program Coordinator and faculty if you need resources and would like support.

- Aggie Cupboard: <https://aggiecupboard.nmsu.edu/>
- Aggie Health and Wellness Center: <https://wellness.nmsu.edu/>
- Aggie One-Stop: <https://onestop.nmsu.edu/>
- American Indian Program: <https://aip.nmsu.edu/>
- Black Programs: <https://blackprograms.nmsu.edu/>
- Chicano Programs: <https://chicano.nmsu.edu/>
- College Assistance Migrant Program (CAMP): <https://camp.nmsu.edu/>
- Disability Access Services and Student Application: <https://studentlife.nmsu.edu/disability-access-services1/index.html>
- Family Outreach Center: <https://families.nmsu.edu/>
- Financial Aid and Scholarship Services: <https://fa.nmsu.edu/>
- HEST College Financial Aid Contacts and Scholarships: <https://hest.nmsu.edu/students/scholarships.html>
- LGBT+ Programs: <https://studentlife.nmsu.edu/lgbt/index.html#:~:text=LGBT%2B%20Programs%20is%20committed%20to,programming%20to%20the%20college%20community>
- Military and Veterans Programs: <https://mvp.nmsu.edu/>
- NMSU Bookstore: <https://www.bkstr.com/nmsustore/home>
- NMSU NOW: COVID-19 Pandemic Action Plan: <https://now.nmsu.edu/>
- Office of Institutional Equity: <https://equity.nmsu.edu/>
- Scholar Dollar\$: <https://scholarships.nmsu.edu/>
- School of Social Work webpage: <https://socialwork.nmsu.edu/index.html>
- School of Social Work Child Welfare Scholars Program: [https://socialwork.nmsu.edu/files/documents/2019\\_CWSP\\_Brochure.pdf](https://socialwork.nmsu.edu/files/documents/2019_CWSP_Brochure.pdf)
- NMSU Student Handbook and Code of Conduct: <https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>
- TRIO Student Support Services: <https://triosss.nmsu.edu/>
- Writing Center: <https://writingcenter.nmsu.edu/>
- Zuhl Library: <https://library.nmsu.edu/>

## SPECIAL SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS

### Child Welfare Scholars Program-Title IV-E

The Child Welfare Scholars Program is offered in partnership with the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD). A student who is selected as a Scholar receives financial support and agrees to work for CYFD as a child welfare protective services social worker following graduation with full pay and benefits. Various special topic classes in child welfare practice and policy are offered and are part of the required curriculum for a student

who is a Child Welfare Scholar. The School of Social Work encourages all students interested in family and child welfare as a career choice to consider applying to be a Child Welfare Scholar. For information, please contact Mónica Montoya, Child Welfare Scholar Coordinator, 575-646-2846 or by email [monicamo@nmsu.edu](mailto:monicamo@nmsu.edu).

## **NMSU UNIVERSITY, GRADUATE SCHOOL AND SOCIAL WORK POLICIES**

### **NMSU Policies**

Several policies apply to all graduate programs. Please review information found online for the Graduate School at <http://gradschool.nmsu.edu/> for policies regarding

1. residency requirements,
2. time limits for degree completion
3. withdrawal from the university
4. delaying admission,
5. leaves of absence and readmission to the program, and
6. adding or dropping courses.

Detailed information regarding grade scales, incomplete grades, and GPA requirements are also provided by the graduate school. MSW students should refer to the current Graduate Catalog: <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/>

### **NMSU Office of Institutional Equity, Title IX**

New Mexico State University, in compliance with applicable laws and in furtherance of its commitment to fostering an environment that welcomes and embraces diversity, does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, retaliation, serious medical condition, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, spousal affiliation, or protected veteran status in its programs and activities, including employment, admissions, and educational programs and activities. You may submit a report online at [equity.nmsu.edu](http://equity.nmsu.edu). If you have an urgent concern, please contact the Office of Institutional Equity at 575-646-3635.

**Title IX** prohibits sex harassment, sexual assault, dating and domestic violence, stalking and retaliation. For more information on discrimination or Title IX, or to file a complaint contact:

Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) - O'Loughlin House, 1130 University Avenue

Phone: (575) 646-3635

E-mail: [equity@nmsu.edu](mailto:equity@nmsu.edu)

Office of Institutional Equity Website: <https://equity.nmsu.edu>

### **Disability Access Services**

Disability Access Services (DAS) provides accommodations, education, consultation and advocacy for qualified students with disabilities at New Mexico State University. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA) covers issues relating to disability and accommodations. If a student has questions or needs an accommodation in the classroom (all medical information is treated confidentially), contact:

Main and NMSU-O Campuses

Disability Access Services

Corbett Center Student Union Room 204

Aaron Salas, Director 575-646-6840

[das@nmsu.edu](mailto:das@nmsu.edu)

### **Student Code of Conduct**

Students at NMSU are expected to observe and maintain not only the highest academic standards of conduct, but also high ethical and professional standards. Students should review the university's information regarding the rules of conduct and definitions of misconduct. Details on the administration of discipline in the case of nonacademic conduct violations by the University can be found in the New Mexico State University Student Handbook: <https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>

### **Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

NMSU requires all students to adhere to the Academic Code of Conduct: Academic Integrity policy outlined here: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/5-10/>. Allegations of academic misconduct by graduate students shall be brought immediately to the attention of the College of HEST Academic Officer and the MSW Program Coordinator. Faculty members with concerns about academic misconduct are required to conduct an investigation detailed here: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/5-11/>. If the investigation results in a sanction or sanctions that impact a student's academic standing with NMSU and/or the SSW, the student has a right to appeal the decision, following this guidance: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/5-14/>.

### **Academic Grievance and Appeal Policy**

Students with an academic grievance or need to appeal a grade should follow guidance provided through NMSU's Graduate Students Academic Grievances Policy, found here: <https://arp.nmsu.edu/5-14/>.

### **Graduate School Provisional Status**

A student admitted provisionally to NMSU's Graduate School must complete their first three courses, a total of 9 credits of graduate work, with a minimum grade-point average of a 3.0. A provisional student who does not meet the 3.0 grade-point average after 9 graduate credits hours is subject to dismissal.

A student admitted to the MSW program that has either a cumulative GPA of less than 3.0 and/or has not completed a prerequisite is admitted on provisional status. No provisional students will be allowed to enroll in the two-year program option. Students admitted on provisional standing must maintain a 3.0 GPA in the first semester to continue in the program or will subject to dismissal.

### **NMSU School of Social Work (SSW) Policies**

#### **Transfer of Credits**

The number of transfer credits will be determined by the program of study. The time limit on course transfer is five years after the completion of the degree. In order to meet residency requirements at the master's degree level, students must take at least 50 percent of their required coursework at NMSU.

If a student is transferring from another CSWE-accredited MSW program to the NMSU SSW and wants to transfer courses to substitute and replace NMSU required coursework, students may request a transfer of credits. A request for transfer of credit must be indicated on the Application for Admission to the Graduate School. Transfer credit requests and required departmental/college forms must be completed prior to the beginning of the first semester of work taken at NMSU. Transfer credit requests and forms must be submitted to the MSW Academic Advisor and MSW Program Coordinator for approval. The SSW has the right to

accept or reject any number of requested transferred credits based on whether the course content aligns with MSW program and NMSU Graduate School requirements. Students should refer to the current Graduate Catalog: <https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/graduate-school/> for more information.

### **Redundancy and Waiver Policy**

**Redundancy:** Students have two options to avoid redundancy and/or repetition of social work content in their MSW program. Applying for the Advanced Standing MSW Program is the first option. Students who qualify for this program option must have graduated from an CSWE-accredited BSW program within the past five years with a 3.5 GPA or higher in social work coursework and must meet the admission requirements. They can apply for Advanced Standing which waives coursework in the first year of the MSW Program. The second option applies to: a) Students graduating from an accredited BSW program but do not meet the admission requirements for Advanced Standing; b) Graduates from other majors who feel that they have had content similar to that in the Foundation Year of the MSW program can make application for a course waiver(s).

Students will not be required to take the courses made redundant through this policy. However, they are still required to complete the credit requirements for each degree plan (Advanced Standing: 30 credits; Regular: 60 credits; Dual: 90 credits) with related coursework. Suggested related graduate electives to replace credits for students who are excused from taking required courses under the Redundancy Policy may include graduate courses (500- or 5000-level courses) from the following disciplines:

Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, Public Health Science, Family & Consumer Science, Counseling & Educational Psychology, Economics, Management, Government, Statistics, Borderland and Ethnic Studies, Women's Studies, Criminal Justice, Business, Nursing, and Special Education.

**Waiver:** Students not admitted to or ineligible for Advanced Standing and students with related degrees who wish to apply for a waiver (s) from taking Foundation Generalist year courses need to follow the process below:

1. To be eligible to request a course waiver you must have a grade of B (83% or above, excluding B- grades) in the course you are submitting to indicate content for the course you are requesting to be waived.
2. Work with the SSW Academic Advisor to complete a Course Waiver Form for each course being waived.
  - a. Indicate on the form the Foundation Year course that you are wanting to waive (See Degree Pathways/Plans)
  - b. Attach to each form a copy of the syllabus and a listing of the course assignments from the course being used to qualify for the waiver.
3. Submit the above materials to the SSW Academic Advisor no later than August 15 of the first year in the MSW Program.
4. The MSW Coordinator and SSW Academic Advisor will review the waiver application and notify students within two weeks of the decision. If approved, students will work with the SSW Academic Advisor to select other courses from the areas listed above.



### **New Mexico Cultural Competency Requirement for NM Licensure**

Students who plan on applying for licensure in New Mexico must provide verification that they have completed a course on New Mexico cultures. This requirement can be completed by one of the following:

1. A three-credit hour course in New Mexico cultures listed on the applicant's transcripts
2. A board approved course, workshop or seminar in New Mexico cultures (SOWK 3110 and SOWK 5110 for students graduating from NMSU)
3. Proof of previously passing the New Mexico cultural examination

Advanced Standing students who obtained their BSW degree from an institution other than New Mexico State University or who have not completed a three-credit hour course in New Mexico cultures (as evidenced on their BSW transcript) must obtain a board approved course or workshop. These requirements are referenced on the NM Board of Social Work Examiners on the following website: [http://www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Social\\_Work.aspx](http://www.rld.state.nm.us/boards/Social_Work.aspx)

### **Criminal Justice Involvement**

Students are advised that if they have lived experiences with the criminal justice system prior to or during their academic program to proactively disclose this information. This is important because arrests and legal convictions may have implications for practicum placements, professional licensure, and professional employment. While this does not affect students' academic standing, this information is shared with the SSW Administrative Team to effectively provide students with guidance. Students are further advised that some state boards of social work examiners, including New Mexico's, may refuse to issue a license or certificate of registration to any person who has been convicted of a felony, in this or another state.

### **Student Support, Rights and Accountability Process**

The SSW promotes students' wellbeing, academic persistence thriving and success throughout their academic program. Collectively, the SSW faculty, staff, and administration act to provide information, support and advisement, engage students in their courses and through fostering an inclusive campus environment, and communicate with students early when academic or behavioral concerns arise. These concerns may include but aren't limited to falling below a 3.0 overall GPA, failing social work course(s), disruptive behavior, violation of NMSU student conduct or academic integrity policies, SSW or practicum site policies, breeches of the NASW Code of Ethics, unprofessional behavior, or behavior that presents harm to the safety of oneself and others. A three-phased approach is applied to offer students support, inform them of their rights and responsibilities, develop a plan for students to demonstrate progress, and to outline consequences if concerns persist.

**Phase 1: Student Support Meeting.** Faculty and students are strongly encouraged to first communicate when issues arise and to attempt to resolve these challenges. Students may also reach out to the SSW Academic Advisor, their faculty advisor, and the Program Coordinator for guidance and information. However, when academic or behavioral concerns arise that have the potential to interfere with students' safety and success in their academic courses or practicum placements, a collaborative problem-solving approach is used. It begins with a Student Support Meeting.

A student, their faculty advisor and/or one or more professor(s) can request a Student Support Meeting. If the concern arises in practicum, this student support process is led by

the Practicum Education Director and Coordinators, and includes the practicum liaison, site instructor, and the student (See Practicum Education Student Handbook). If the concern occurs in a course or courses outside from practicum, the student support process is led by the Program Coordinator and includes the professor(s) and the student. These meetings may also include the SSW Academic Advisor. The student support meeting includes gaining an understanding of the concern(s) from the faculty and student perspectives, identifying student strengths and needs, providing the student with support and resources, and defining a plan for students to demonstrate progress toward academic success. This academic success plan must include a timeline for resolution. The Program Coordinator will monitor whether this timeline is completed. A second student support meeting may be convened if the student needs additional support, to receive progress updates or to conclude the process.

### **Phase 2: Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Accountability Process**

The second phase of this process is a formal stage called Student Rights, Responsibilities and Accountability. This phase is initiated when concerns addressed during the Student Support Meeting are not resolved and/or a student is at risk for serious consequences, such as failing a course or course(s), being removed from a practicum placement which impacts their ability to complete practicum requirements, being placed on academic probation or being dismissed from the SSW and/or University. Phase 2 may be immediately initiated if significant violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, NMSU academic conduct or integrity policies, or safety occur. The formal Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Accountability process begins using the following steps:

- Step 1:** The Program Coordinator is notified via email that a Student Rights, Responsibilities and Accountability meeting is necessary.
- Step 2:** The Program Coordinator will schedule the meeting with the student, professor(s), and other relevant parties, as soon as possible but no later than two weeks from notification. During this time, the Program Coordinator will prepare and provide to all relevant parties information for the meeting, including a description of the concern, steps taken to resolve the concern, academic investigation findings, the student's academic progress and status, and relevant NMSU policies.
- Step 3:** Upon convening a Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Accountability meeting, a clear plan to resolve concerns with measurable actions, people responsible, and a timeline will be developed.
- Step 4:** If a student is nonresponsive and chooses not to participate in this process or concerns are not resolved within the timeline defined during the meeting, the Program Coordinator will convene a second meeting with all involved parties to recommend the student continue with their academic program with conditions or be dismissed from the program. If the recommendation is that student continues in the program, the Program Coordinator will monitor the student's progress. If the recommendation is to dismiss the student from the program or conditions for continuing in the program are not met, the Program Coordinator will notify the SSW Director in writing.

### **Phase 3: Dismissal from the School of Social Work**

The SSW Director and faculty take seriously the responsibilities to ensure the MSW Program is high quality and rigorous and to prepare our students to be highly trained, skilled and ethical professionals as they begin practicing social work. Dismissing a student from the SSW is an

outcome that may occur when other avenues of support and accountability are not successful in resolving student academic or behavioral concerns. In addition to the circumstances described earlier, a student may be dismissed from the SSW if they:

1. Receive two “D’s” in the social work professional core classes;
2. Receive one “F” in the social work professional core classes;
3. Receive one “U” in practicum;
4. Earn below the minimum 3.0 cumulative GPA at the end of two consecutive grading periods; if a student is on provisional status, dismissal occurs at the end of one grading period;

The SSW Director will notify the student, in writing, of dismissal when any of the above occurs.

### **Behavioral and Professional Standards for MSW Students**

Students are expected to meet the ethical and behavioral standards detailed below. Further statements of student behavior and performance are found within the Graduate Catalog (<https://catalogs.nmsu.edu/nmsu/regulations-policies/>), the NMSU Student Handbook (<https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>) and the NMSU Student Code of Conduct (<https://studenthandbook.nmsu.edu/>)

Professional behavior is one of the core competencies for social work programs. This competency is based in the Code of Ethics put forth by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW, 2021). The code guides the NMSU School of Social Work and all students must strive to abide by the standards. The NASW Code of Ethics can be found online: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>. In the event of academic or non-academic misconduct, students are held to the rules that are found in the NMSU Student Handbook. Student grievance and appeals processes are outlined in the General Rules and Regulations and Special Grievance Policies sections of this handbook.

### **Professional Conduct**

In addition to the academic expectations, social work students are expected to demonstrate professional behavior that reflects a commitment to the core values of the social work profession. Behavior contrary to the ethical standards of social work will be cause for review of the student’s admission to the program or continued future within the MSW Program. Examples of behavior that would warrant such a review include:

1. deprecating oral and written statements,
2. gestures toward other students, faculty, clients, colleagues, or the agency placement,
3. wearing clothing with statements that are offensive towards other students, faculty, and/or persons from populations reflecting racial, ethnic, ability status, religious, socio-economic, gender, and sexual orientation differences,
4. problems in personal functioning (health, mental health) sufficiently serious to endanger functioning in the program and client welfare, and failure to maintain boundaries towards other students, faculty, clients, and towards other workers in agency.

Since the role of social worker involves helping people from a variety of backgrounds and with a range of problems, it is important that social work students not permit personal issues

to interfere with this role. Students must have the emotional and psychological resources necessary to render effective assistance to those in need. In instances where MSW students demonstrate behaviors that suggest that their own difficulties are not sufficiently resolved to be able to help and support others at the time, they may be denied admission to the program or once admitted may be dismissed from the program.

Client confidentiality represents a specific consideration. Students are expected to maintain confidentiality regarding all client information, client identification, specific social agencies and organizations. This includes any discussion that occurs in the classrooms when it relates to clients or personal information about other students or teachers.

## **ADVISEMENT**

The School of Social Work emphasizes the importance of the advisor/advisee relationship, striving to develop a relationship which is mutually respectful and satisfying. The main objective of advising is to enable students to achieve their educational goals, consistent with the objectives of the School and the profession. The student is placed at the center of their learning and has primary responsibility for the educational effort. Advisors are responsible for fostering an integration of the total educational experience and facilitating student progress toward educational and career goals.

Advising includes an ongoing assessment of each student's aptitude, motivation, and suitability for a professional career in social work. The Advisement is designed to assist students in clarifying all aspects of the MSW Program. In addition, academic and faculty advisement will assist students in:

1. Submitting university forms, with academic advisor's signature, as required. (Academic Advisor)
2. Mapping out a semester-by-semester plan of study, with a schedule of courses prior to the registration period; (Academic Advisor)
3. Developing a program of study that includes approving elective courses; (Academic Advisor)
4. Personal, professional, and career development. (Faculty Advisor)

The School of Social Work offers students two types of advising – **Academic Advising** and **Faculty Advising**.

### **MSW Academic Advising**

Academic advising is provided to students in all MSW programs by either MSW faculty or the MSW Program Advisor. Advising assignments are made based on student program and needs. Academic advising includes inquiry about the MSW program, STAR audits, transfer credits, advisement regarding course selections, all necessary paperwork related to graduation and recruitment, responsible for coordination concerning academic performance.

### **MSW Faculty Advising**

Faculty advising is also provided in both locations. MSW Faculty Advisors provide advising related to professional development and issues related to academic success (e.g. conflicts with instructors, other students, life events that interfere with academic success). All MSW students are assigned a full time MSW Faculty member as their faculty advisor.

While it is expected that students first seek assistance from their academic and/or faculty advisors, if an academic or professional advising issue cannot be resolved at that level, the issue will be referred to the MSW Program Coordinator for consideration and resolution.

**For successful advisement, students are expected to:**

1. meet with their academic advisor at least once per semester, i.e. registration periods to discuss and decide matters related to programmatic requirements, scheduling of classes, course registration, elective choices, etc.;
2. contact their academic advisor if considering a leave of absence, withdrawing from the program, or making plans that are outside of the standard student Program of Study;
3. meet with their faculty advisor, if requested, to discuss academic or professional performance issues that may jeopardize their continuation in the MSW program;
4. collaborate with their faculty advisor in reviewing options and alternatives regarding problem solving, including taking a leave of absence, continuation and/or withdrawal from the program, or participating in a Counseling-in Process that includes the student’s instructors, field director and field instructor. The academic advisor is available to guide students in this process and inform them about available options.

Advisor Roles	Faculty Advisor	Academic Advisor
Provide advice and counsel advisees when they are experiencing difficulties	X	
Assist students on matters pertaining to the university and community, career/employment planning, special projects, practicum experiences, and possible problems impinging on academic performance	X	
Support Counseling-in Process and work with the advisee to find appropriate solutions to problems upon advisee request	X	
Help the student plan a program of study during registration, including helping in course selection; orientation to the substance and structure of the MSW curriculum; and explanation of the expectations entailed in the role of the student		X
Sign student Add/Drop forms, candidacy forms, and other forms as Required		X
Monitor student progress ensuring that all degree/curriculum requirements are fulfilled in an orderly, timely and satisfactory way		X
Maintain accurate and up-to-date student records with relevant and regular notations	X	X
Support and protect the rights of students by informing them of grievance procedures	X	X
Conduct a thorough and final “audit” of their advisee’s academic records certifying that all MSW degree requirements have been satisfactorily completed for graduation.		X
Answer questions about the admission process		X

### **Changing Faculty Advisor**

Request to change a faculty advisor begins with discussing this with current faculty advisor and then bringing the request to the MSW Program Coordinator.

### **Changing Registration**

All changes in registration need to be in consultation with the student's academic advisor and must meet published university deadlines. Approval for exceptions to NMSU deadlines for adding/dropping courses is extremely rare and will only be considered for those circumstances which were beyond the student's control that developed after the published deadline. Examples of appropriate circumstances include documented major medical conditions, documented death or crisis in the student's immediate family and similar circumstances. Examples which are generally not considered appropriate circumstances include those which are related to employment, financial aid, grades or academic standing. Rare exemptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis with appropriate documentation.

### **GRADUATING FROM THE MSW PROGRAM -ADVANCEMENT TO CANDIDACY Graduate Forms**

All graduate forms can be accessed at the Graduate School website. Go to <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/index.html>, click on "current students" and then click on "graduate forms". You may also access them by clicking here: <https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/Graduate%20Forms.html>. The admission of a student to the Graduate School does not imply admission to candidacy for an advanced degree. The School in which the student intends to become a candidate for a master's degree must be satisfied as to the student's sound basic training and the ability to pursue studies at the graduate level. Departments may require a comprehensive qualifying examination before officially approving any candidate for the master's degree.

### **Checklist for Master Degree Candidates**

The Graduate Catalog provides students with a checklist for ensuring that they file the right forms at the correct time. Students are advised to carefully review this checklist as they are responsible for the information contained within. Failure to adhere to the checklist and filing forms at the correct time can delay the student's graduation. Following is a checklist to determine if essential paperwork is complete.

1. **STAR Degree Audit (Student Academic Requirements)** A degree audit check should be completed with your academic advisor prior to submitting the Final Examination form.
2. File **Transfer for Credit Form** in the first semester (if applicable).
3. Register for master's thesis or research project during appropriate semesters (if applicable). Obtain and read a copy of guidelines,
4. **Preparation of a Thesis or Dissertation**, (if applicable) from the Graduate School. This may help you decide which research option to select.
5. File **Application for Degree Form**. (See current Academic Calendar for deadlines). Students can submit their Application for Degree (Diploma) on your my.nmsu.edu site under the "Student" tab ☐ "Student Records & Degree

Application” ☐ “Application for Degree (Diploma). You will be charged a submission fee. If you are not able to complete all requirements by the deadline specified on the application for degree, you will forfeit any fees paid and will have to reapply and pay the fees again.

6. Complete the end of your second to last semester in the program, make arrangements with the program to schedule your final examination.

### **Final Exit Project**

This cumulative final project provides an opportunity to integrate the student’s total experience and discuss it with faculty. The School of Social Work final examination format is an examination of the candidate’s field of study: Advanced Generalist Practice and may consist of written and oral components.

The final examination purposes are: To clarify whether the master’s degree candidate has integrated all components of the curriculum in such a way as to demonstrate that he or she has the necessary competencies to engage in professional practice in multicultural settings and to offer the candidate the opportunity to present her or his understanding of such practice, to define and demonstrate current values, knowledge, and skills, to identify gaps in these areas and to describe plans for addressing them.

Information regarding the format and structure of the final examination will be provided to students at the beginning of the spring semester of the year in which they graduate. The final project can only be completed in students’ final semester of the program.

### **Research Option: Thesis**

Graduate students in Social Work have two program options, the thesis, or the final exam/final project. The thesis option is typically selected by students who intend to pursue a Ph.D. degree.

There are several steps involved with the Thesis Track. First, a student secures a thesis chair, and then works with the chair to form a thesis committee. Next, the student works with the chair and committee to write a thesis proposal, which involves a rationale for conducting the proposed research and details the intended research design. A student should ideally choose a thesis chair by the end of the first semester of the program of study.

The master’s degree committee must consist of a minimum of three members. The thesis chair serves as the committee chair, and the second committee member must also be graduate faculty but can either be tenure-track or college-track faculty in the School of Social Work. A third member serves as the Graduate School Dean’s Representative and must be from a different department. The Dean’s Representative ensures that the Graduate School policies and procedures are followed throughout the thesis process.

A student may elect to have more than (but not fewer than) three thesis committee members. The thesis chair works with a graduate student toward proposal approval and thesis defense. A thesis chair ultimately directs the student’s research activities, such as: choosing a topic, initial research design, suggestions for further reading, developing a theoretical foundation, completing

the IRB process, providing critical feedback on emerging analysis and scholarly writing, and guiding both the proposal and defense process. Once your committee is selected and you choose the thesis tract, you will need to register for the thesis option. Having once registered for a thesis, a student must continue to register for a minimum of one (1) credit of thesis or course work each regular semester (except summer unless you are defending during the summer) until the thesis is approved by the Graduate School. Anyone who fails to abide by this requirement will be considered withdrawn from the University and, to resume studies, must formally apply for readmission and satisfy the requirements in effect at the time of re-application.

The thesis is a piece of original research conducted in a systematic and rigorous manner. The thesis topic is in an area of personal or practice interest to the student. This can often be a topic arising from the student's field or practice experience. The thesis must be related to social work and advanced generalist practice. It may employ quantitative or qualitative approaches, determined by the questions and interests of the student. Should you choose the thesis option, listed below are required MSW program procedures:

1. With the support of the Chair, the student must complete a Thesis Proposal Form and formulate a proposal of 4-6 pages which includes:
  - a. the research question
  - b. the literature review to support the question
  - c. brief description of the research method
  - d. relevance to social work and advanced generalist practice
2. The proposal is reviewed by the proposal committee which either:
  - a. accepts the proposal
  - b. rejects the proposal
  - c. accepts conditionally on fulfillment of specific recommendations

For specific instructions on thesis preparation and format, the student should obtain the Guidelines for Preparing a Thesis or Dissertation from the Graduate School (<https://gradschool.nmsu.edu/Current%20Students/thesis-and-dissertation.html>) and consult, as needed, with the thesis editor in the office of the Graduate School. Students are advised to submit to the editor, prior to typing in final form, a list of references, table of contents, figures, and tables so that the format may be checked for accuracy. Follow the graduate school policies and timelines to submit your thesis at the appropriate time to graduate within your individual program of study.

## **HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

The University's policy on the use of human subjects in research projects is covered in NMSU's *Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual*. These policies are strictly enforced by each college and by the Graduate School. A *Permission to Use Human Subjects in Research* form must be completed and approved prior to undertaking any research project involving human subjects (including interviews, surveys, etc.).

The forms are available at <https://research.nmsu.edu/RIC/Home.html>. Students must also complete the computer-based training for researchers and research staff found at the CITI site: <https://www.citiprogram.org>