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**NWU Master Social Work Program  
Student Handbook**

October 2023

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the Graduate Social Work Program (MSW) at Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU). The NWU MSW entered pre-Candidacy through the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) on October 1, 2020, and opened its doors to students in August 2021. The NWU MSW received Candidacy status in March 2022, and that status was reaffirmed in March 2023. The NWU MSW expects to receive retroactive accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education in 2024.

The mission of the program is as follows:

The Master of Social Work Program at Nebraska Wesleyan University prepares students for trauma conscious advanced social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. We are committed to preparing our students to engage in critical thinking in order to integrate knowledge of systemic oppression to promote social justice, apply ethical standards and principles, and enhance strengths and resiliency among diverse populations.

And our Program Goals are:

1. Foster students to be competent, trauma conscious advanced level social work practitioners.
2. Foster critical thinking and ethical practice among students.
3. Promote self-awareness and self-regulation in students' practice with diverse populations.
4. Prepare students to identify social injustices and systems of oppression impacting practice at all levels, with all clients.

As faculty involved in designing this program, we were intentional in our choice of a specialization in trauma conscious practice for many reasons. First, most of us worked in varied fields (healthcare, child welfare, grief/loss, mental illness, and criminal justice) with one thing in common—our clients, in most cases, had been exposed to and impacted by trauma. We saw this at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice. As such, we feel strongly that a focus on trauma and well-being is important for any practicing social worker. For those wishing to attain clinical licensure, this program was specifically designed with this in mind; however, we did not want to limit your specialized scope of practice to only one practice setting. The specialized year of coursework will also prepare you to work with a variety of populations who have experienced or are consistently exposed to trauma at the individual, family, group, community, and organizational levels of practice, including supervising and leading in organizations where secondary and vicarious trauma are common.

## **Nondiscrimination Statement**

The Social Work Department and thus the NWU MSW Program operate under the nondiscrimination policy of Nebraska Wesleyan University which states:

Diversity is a core value of Nebraska Wesleyan University's mission and we embrace it as a source of strength. Nebraska Wesleyan University provides equal educational and employment opportunities to qualified persons in all areas of university operation without regard to religion or creed, age, genetic information, gender identity and expression, sexual identity and orientation, veteran status, disability, marital status, race, or national or ethnic origin, in compliance with state and federal laws, including but not limited to Title XII, Title IX, and the ADA (Nebraska Wesleyan University Catalog, 2018–2019).

## Land Acknowledgment

As a settler on stolen land, we wish to **acknowledge** the land on which we are operating. With acknowledgment comes truth. Both are essential to build mutual respect and connection across all barriers of heritage and difference. We acknowledge the truth that the land upon which we teach and operate on today is the ancestral and forcibly ceded territory of indigenous nations.

We acknowledge every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contributed their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment. Some were drawn here from distant lands to make a better life; some came against their will; some lived on and traversed these lands for thousands of years.

We acknowledge that the land and the natural resources on which these nations depended were and are inextricably linked to their identities, cultures, and livelihoods as well as their physical and spiritual well-being (from *World Bank* web site).

As we acknowledge, we **honor**.

We honor vital ancestral knowledge and expertise of land, resources, culture, and spirit.

We honor the elders, past and present, of the indigenous nations that inhabited the lands of eastern Nebraska:

- Dakota
- Kansa
- Missouriia
- Ponca
- Pawnee
- Omaha
- Otoe
- Sac and Fox
- Winnebago

We honor the many other indigenous nations that we do not name but who lived on or

traveled these lands over thousands of years, as well as those who live on these lands today. We honor this land upon which we live, and we pledge to steward it throughout the generations.

And may this acknowledgment and honoring be a step toward deeper relationship and meaningful action engaged in a cooperative manner and guided by the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous peoples.

## **Program Requirements**

### **1. Technology Requirements**

All students in the NWU MSW Program must have access to the technology required to effectively participate in class. This includes a computer with the ability to connect to the internet for the purposes of reviewing course material and submitting assignments. Additionally, some courses may require students to record themselves for projects and other activities which may require specific web-based applications and access to a webcam or other recording device. If you have concerns about technology requirements, please speak with your advisor or the NWU MSW Program Director.

### **2. Program Preparation**

All students are required to complete a series of tutorials to assist them in preparing for the program. Specific information on the tutorials required and related due dates will be shared during orientation. Some or all of the tutorials may be required to be completed online prior to beginning your first class. The following tutorials will be required, and others may be added for specific courses:

1. Program Overview Tutorial
2. Canvas Tutorial
3. APA and Writing Tips Tutorial
4. Library Tutorial

### **3. Professionalism Requirements**

This program is intended to prepare you for the profession of social work. A part of this preparation includes an ongoing expectation of professional behavior in all activities related to the program, both in and out of the classroom. This includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Professional Communication (written and verbal)
  - a. Students are expected to approach all communication with faculty, staff, peers, and stakeholders in a professional manner. This includes everything from the use of the appropriate salutation in an email communication to in-class presentations to negotiation of practicum placements.
2. Interpersonal Skills in Working as a Team
  - a. All classes will require you to participate in a team environment, whether that be an informal discussion group or a more formal team assignment. It is our expectation that you will use empathic, assertive communication in working as a team to ensure both your needs and those of your team

members are met. Team members should attempt to resolve conflicts on their own, prior to seeking assistance from faculty.

### 3. Preparation and Self-Awareness

- a. As this is an accelerated program, it is necessary you prepare for each class by completing the required readings and other assignments. Faculty have an expectation of student engagement throughout the class, and preparation will assist you in ensuring you are able to participate effectively.
- b. A key component of effective social work practice is self-awareness and self-regulation. We ask that you work to build these skills throughout your time in the program. Specifically, we ask that you be aware of your level of participation in class discussions and exercises in order to regulate your involvement (reduce/increase) as needed. Additionally, when sharing information in the classroom setting, consider the usefulness of the comment in furthering the conversation and overall understanding of the concept being discussed.

### 4. Prioritizing Your Student Role

- a. We recognize that all students are balancing several competing demands. Professionals must learn how to prioritize these demands. The classroom environment is no different. Appropriate prioritization will be demonstrated through attendance, engagement, and respect for the classroom environment and your role in it (use of cellphone in class, side conversations, overall participation, etc.).

### 5. Compliance with NASW Code of Ethics

- a. Social Workers are guided by the NASW Code of Ethics and core values. All students are required to be familiar with this document and its contents, as all students will be held to these standards.
- b. The Code of Ethics can be viewed through this link:  
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

## 4. Student Feedback

Student engagement both in and out of the classroom are critical to the program's success. Each student has a right and a responsibility to provide feedback to the program. As such, all students are encouraged to complete course evaluation forms and satisfaction surveys when prompted. This information is used in program assessment and helps to guide our practices.

Specific feedback regarding any of the above defined policies is welcomed and can be submitted directly to the MSW Program Director or to the student representatives on the Social Work Advisory Committee (SWAC). Any student wishing to meet with the Program Director is encouraged to do so by scheduling an appointment or by attending one of the scheduled "open" office hours.

## **MSW Program Committees and Councils**

### **1. Graduate Social Work Executive Council (GSWEC)**

This council will be chaired by the MSW Program Director. The chair of the GSWEC will appoint at least two faculty members and one community member to serve as the GSWEC for a given semester.

### **2. Social Work Advisory Committee (SWAC)**

This committee will be chaired by the Department Chair and will meet at least one time per semester. The purpose of this committee is to (1) **advise** the program in reviewing policy and curriculum changes, (2) assist with **educational improvement** through reviewing program assessment and assisting the program to meet CSWE accreditation requirements, and (3) **connect the program to professional practice and current issues facing the field**. Student representatives are expected to provide the student perspective regarding the above areas and also to gather and provide relevant feedback from their peers.

The chair will appoint members to serve on SWAC. Membership must include at least six practicing social work professionals from the community (at least two professionals must be alumni), at least one educational program partner (MCC, SCC, IWCC, etc.), and at least three enrolled students representing all undergraduate and graduate program offerings. Members of SWAC will serve one 3-year term that is renewable for a second term. Student members will serve a one-year term that is renewable for a second term. Terms should be staggered. All social work faculty are encouraged to attend SWAC meetings.

Community representatives may either be nominated for service on SWAC or may submit notification of interest to the Department Chair. The Department Chair will seek out support of the nomination from department faculty. If all are in agreement, the Department Chair will work to orient the new member to their role on SWAC. Student representatives will be elected by their peers (undergraduate social work majors and graduate social work students).

### **3. Student Social Work Organization (SSWO)**

Each academic year, students elected to serve on SWAC may choose to establish or reestablish the Student Social Work Organization. Undergraduate and graduate students may elect to organize separately or may choose to collaborate. The purpose of this organization will be determined by the student leadership and will be guided and supported by a faculty member within the department. Such organization could include physical or virtual spaces.

## **Program Policies**

Specific policies of the NWU MSW Program are outlined below. Please note the NWU MSW Program falls under the NWU Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures,

which can be found at the following link: <https://catalog.nebrwesleyan.edu/cc/2018-2019/graduate-academic-policies-and-procedures>

## 1. Admissions Criteria

- Undergraduate degree (3.0 GPA) from a college/university accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association, with previous coursework in statistics as well as at least nine credit hours of coursework in the social sciences, to include sociology, psychology, political science, and similar disciplines
- Submission of a résumé documenting previous volunteer, internship, and/or work experience
- Two references (one academic reference from previous faculty member [if possible])
- Writing sample formatted in APA style with the use of citations (The sample should demonstrate sufficient writing skill needed for graduate level coursework. The writing sample should be no more than five pages of writing with a title page and reference page [no more than seven pages total]. Applicants will be provided with prompts that should guide their response.)

### Determination of Advanced Standing:

Students who have earned an undergraduate degree in social work from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited educational institution or program recognized through its International Social Work Degree Recognition and Evaluation Service, or covered under a memorandum of understanding with international social work accreditors, may apply for the Master of Social Work program and enter into advanced standing. Applicants must have received the undergraduate social work degree within five years prior of applying at Nebraska Wesleyan University.

Students who completed an undergraduate degree in social work more than five years previous are eligible to apply for advanced standing and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Consideration will be made for social work coursework previously completed based on its fit under the current CSWE standards and coursework required at the generalist level of the program. Students seeking advanced standing may be required to complete bridge content, not previously achieved in the student's baccalaureate education, to fulfill the requirements at the generalist level. No student with a baccalaureate degree in social work will be required to complete content previously achieved in their undergraduate social work education.

### Advanced Standing Admissions Criteria:

- Undergraduate degree in social work from a CSWE accredited program (3.0 GPA) from a college/university, accredited by a recognized regional accrediting association, with previous coursework in statistics as well as at least nine credit hours of coursework in the social sciences, to include sociology, psychology, political science, and similar disciplines
  - \*\* Degree must have been obtained within the past five years. For candidates who do not meet this criteria, applications will be reviewed and considered on

- a case-by-case basis.
- NWU MSW Program may require students to complete courses prior to admittance into the program
  - For students who have completed an undergraduate degree in social work within the last five years, a practicum evaluation must be provided
  - Submission of a résumé documenting previous volunteer, internship, and/or work experience
  - Two references (one academic reference from previous faculty member [if possible])
  - Writing sample formatted in APA style with the use of citations (The sample should demonstrate sufficient writing skill needed for graduate level coursework. The writing sample should be no more than five pages of writing with a title page and reference page [no more than seven pages total]. Applicants will be provided with prompts that should guide their response.)

## **2. Evaluation of Applications**

All applications are reviewed by a group of at least two MSW faculty, using a holistic process. The committee will use a standardized rubric when reviewing applications. Once the committee has completed their review, the MSW Program Director will compile the information and will make a determination of admittance, conditional admittance (i.e., need to complete prerequisites and/or academic concerns), wait-listed, or denied admittance. Students will be notified of their admittance decision via letter from the Program Director. Students who are conditionally admitted will be notified of this status, as well as the details in how to remove the contingency. Students who are conditionally admitted based on a required prerequisite will be notified of the timeframe in which those need to be completed and students who are conditionally admitted based on academic concerns will be notified of the requirement that they attain a B- average or higher in their first six credit hours in the program.

Students who submit applications by January 15 will be notified in writing of their acceptance status by March 15. The application will remain open until all program openings are filled. Applications received after the January 15 deadline will be reviewed upon receipt, and an acceptance decision will be communicated via letter from the Program Director within two months from the date the application was submitted.

Applicants who are not admitted to the program are encouraged to reapply in subsequent years. Students may appeal the admission decision by submitting their appeal in writing to the MSW Program Director not more than 10 days after the date of the letter. The Program Director will consult with the GSWEC to determine a final admission decision. This final decision will be communicated within 10 days following the review by GSWEC.

## **3. Course Load Guidelines**

All NWU graduate students must carry a load of six credit hours per semester to be considered full-time. Students who are working full-time may be limited to six to nine credit hours per semester to allow the time needed to fully prepare and complete



assignments required by the program. No student will be allowed to take more than 16 credit hours in a traditional academic semester (two 8-week sessions or one summer-long session).

#### **4. Course Completion**

Students must complete all prerequisites prior to taking advanced courses. Requests for exceptions to this policy may be made to the MSW Program Director and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. No credits in the NWU MSW Program can be completed through examination.

##### Transfer of Credit

Students who have completed graduate-level courses in social work may request and, in some cases, be granted transfer of credits for eligible courses. It is the responsibility of applicants into the MSW Program to request transfer of credit to the MSW Program Director. All requests of this sort should include transcripts and a syllabus from each course where credit is sought. Course syllabi must include readings, assignments, and weekly topics covered in class. Transfer credit will not be considered for practicum or any of the courses in the specialized curriculum.

Review of transfer credits will occur during the application phase into the MSW Program to ensure assessment of course equivalency to the generalist curriculum. The MSW Program will follow the NWU Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures when reviewing requests made for transfer credits. Students may transfer a maximum of nine credits into the MSW Program at Nebraska Wesleyan University. No transfer credits will be considered for specialized level coursework. All transferred courses must have a grade of B- or higher and have been completed within the past five years through a CSWE accredited educational institution.

Graduate courses taken at another institution after a student has matriculated at NWU are not eligible for transfer credit. Due to the difficulties in evaluating international transcripts, no transfer credits will be granted for course(s) taken at international universities.

##### Credit for Life Experience

In keeping with the Council of Social Work (CSWE) standards, the Social Work Department at Nebraska Wesleyan University cannot grant academic credit for previous work or life experience for any of the courses offered and required within the MSW curriculum.

#### **5. Program Progression**

We recognize and encourage students to consider the time they have available to complete the required coursework included in this program. Students are encouraged to move as quickly or as slowly as makes sense for their life situation.

The NWU MSW Program follows the [Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures](#) related to a leave of absence. Students wishing to take a leave of absence (no more

than two consecutive semesters, including summer) must share this with their advisor and complete the leave of absence form with the NWU Registrar. Students may be granted a one semester extension to their leave of absence through a request made to the MSW Program Director.

Students who fail to request a leave of absence may be dismissed from the program.

## **6. Academic Standards**

The NWU MSW Program follows the [Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures](#) related to Academic Satisfactory Progress. Students are required to receive a B- or better in all courses. Students receiving less than a B- will be required to repeat the course. Earning a grade lower than a B- twice in the same course will result in academic dismissal from NWU.

Please see the Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures for additional details regarding Academic Probation and Academic Dismissal. Students academically dismissed from their programs who wish to return after waiting a minimum of one semester, must seek and be approved for readmission. Students approved for readmission are readmitted on Academic Probation.

### Academic Writing

Communicating clearly and effectively through writing is an essential social work skill. Papers should be carefully proofread and edited, not only for grammar but also for content and clarity of expression. Your writing assignments are expected to demonstrate a clear expression and organization of thought. Your writing assignments should also contain minimal to no grammatical and spelling errors. Finally, the guidelines of the assignment must be followed.

It is also very important that you adhere to APA (American Psychological Association) documentation style especially with regard to citations and referencing. APA style is used in all scholarly social work publications and therefore needs to be mastered by social work students.

The NWU Cooper Center is available to NWU MSW students and can provide assistance with writing. For more information about the Cooper Center and to schedule an appointment, please visit the Cooper Center page of the NWU website: <https://www.nebrwesleyan.edu/inside-nwu/cooper-foundation-center-academic-resources/cooper-center>

### Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is one of the basic principles of a university community. The Code of Student Conduct states that students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty—which encompasses such activities as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, and bribery—are subject to disciplinary sanctions. (See section six of the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for a comprehensive listing of misconduct that is subject

to disciplinary sanctions, as well as relevant terms and definitions.)

The NWU MSW Program will utilize specific software that detects plagiarism in all course offerings. Faculty members have full authority in determining the action to be taken in cases of academic dishonesty up to and including filing a Report of Academic Dishonesty with the Registrar or filing a complaint with the Student Conduct System. If a Report of Academic Dishonesty is filed, a first report on a student prompts no further action. However, if a second report for a student is filed, a formal complaint is submitted against the student with the Student Conduct System. Any report after a second will launch another complaint. Complaints submitted to the Student Conduct System prompt a formal judicial investigation.

## **7. Class Attendance**

Students are expected to attend ALL classes. Attendance will be taken during each class. Missing one class is equal to missing more than FOUR classes during a traditional semester-long course. Because this program is offered in an intensive 8-week-long format, missing any time in class will be detrimental to your learning process and to your final grade.

1. If a student misses two classes in one 8-week session, the student will be required to retake the course and may receive a failing grade.
  - a. Students may appeal this decision to the MSW Program Director.

## **8. Inclement Weather Policy**

The NWU MSW Program will follow the NWU Weather Closing Policy (<https://www.nebrwesleyan.edu/about-nwu/policies/weather-closing-policy>) for class cancellation due to inclement weather.

The NWU MSW Program may elect to shift an in-person classroom experience to a virtual classroom experience in the event of inclement weather, when NWU has not closed. NWU faculty will notify their students via email and/or Canvas announcement by 3:00 p.m. on the day of class of the intent to hold class virtually. Regular attendance policies will apply to virtual classroom experiences, unless otherwise noted by the faculty member.

## **9. Field Education**

Entrance into field practicum is based on completion of specific program requirements, approval of the MSW faculty, and permission of the Field Director. Students must complete 400 hours of practicum at the generalist level and 500 hours of practicum at the specialized level. Students will only be placed in field agencies that have received program approval.

For detailed information on field practicum related policies and procedures, see the MSW Program Practicum Manual. A brief summary is outlined below.

Prior to entering field practicum, students must do the following:

1. Complete Practicum Orientation

2. Complete an Intent to Enter Field form
  - a. Intent to Enter Field forms are made available on Canvas. Intent to Enter Field forms must be submitted to the Field Director by the time specified on the Field Practicum Checklists available on Canvas. Students follow the checklist that corresponds with the term they intend to enter field.
3. Complete asynchronous modules available in Canvas
  - a. The modules to be completed will be specified by the Field Director and will include but not be limited to the following topics:
    - i. Worker Safety
    - ii. Professional Presentation of Self
    - iii. Ethical Decision Making
4. Complete the background check process required by NWU
  - a. Following the submission of the required forms, the Field Director will submit the names of all interested students to the Vice President of Human Resources so a background check can be completed.
    - i. Students with pending charges and/or certain convictions may not be allowed to enter into practicum or may be limited in their practicum placement options.
5. Complete a consultation interview with the Field Director
  - a. Interviews will be scheduled with students who have completed the above listed requirements and will be facilitated by the Field Director.
  - b. Student progress toward program requirements will be evaluated in advance of this interview and will be discussed, in addition to conversations about the student's interest areas for field practicum.
    - i. Students may be approved to enter field practicum, delayed entrance with specific tasks to be completed, or denied entry into field practicum.
      1. Students may be delayed entry to field to allow them to complete recommendations set by the Field Director.
        - a. The Field Director will consult with the MSW Program Director in making this decision.
        - b. Students who are delayed placement in field will be notified of clear expectations and benchmarks that must be achieved in order to be approved to enter field practicum. This notification will also include specific details as to when the student's field placement status will be reviewed again.
        - c. Students will have the option to meet with their advisor to adjust their plan of study accordingly.
      2. Denied entry into Field Practicum.
        - a. The Field Director will consult with the MSW Program Director when making this decision.
        - b. Students who are denied entry into field practicum will be notified in writing of this decision.
      3. Appealing the decision of the Field Director

- a. Students who are delayed or denied entry into field practicum may appeal this decision to the GSWEC by submitting a request in writing to the MSW Program Director within five business days of receiving their formal notification. This request must include a plan for how the student will address the concerns raised.
- b. The Field Director and the MSW Program Director will meet with GSWEC to review the appeal, and the GSWEC will make a final decision regarding the delay or denial of field practicum.
- c. Students will have the option to meet with their advisor in order to assist the student in determining next steps.

## 10. Program Gatekeeping

- 1. Academic Performance
  - a. This is evaluated based on grades earned in MSW courses. Academic probation and program dismissal for academic reasons are enforced by the University's Academic Affairs Office. These considerations and consequences are outlined below.
  - b. Academic performance considerations include:
    - i. Academic dismissal is outlined in the [Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures](#). This policy states the following:
      - 1. Any student with a fall, spring, or summer semester GPA of less than 2.50 or a cumulative GPA of less than 2.67 will be placed on Academic Probation.
      - 2. Academic Dismissal terminates a student from their master's program. Academic Probation may or may not have occurred prior to Academic Dismissal, which occurs under these circumstances:
        - (1) A semester GPA below a 2.50 at the end of a probationary semester or a cumulative GPA below a 2.67 at the end of a probationary semester
        - (2) Earning a grade of "F" in the master's capstone course(s) in their program
        - (3) Earning a grade lower than "B-" twice in the same credit-bearing course in the graduate program.
  - b. To appeal Academic Performance decisions, students must follow the Grade Change/Appeal Policy found in the [Graduate Academic Policies and Procedures](#).
- 2. Professional Performance
  - a. It is the responsibility of NWU MSW Program faculty to assess each students' readiness for advanced social work practice. NWU MSW Program faculty will evaluate student professional performance through gathering information including but not limited to the student's academic performance, classroom

and practicum behavior, overall compliance with faculty expectations, compliance with program requirements and policies, etc. Students who exhibit concerning behavior related to professional performance will be subject to the gatekeeping processes described below.

- b. Professional performance considerations include:
  1. Student does not demonstrate professional presentation of self in the classroom and in other interactions with faculty, peers, and/or in field practicum, as evidenced by unprofessional dress, demeanor, and/or treatment of others, and other such concerns.
  2. Student fails to accept and integrate feedback and direction from teachers, supervisors, peers, etc., thereby evidencing limited capacity for professional growth.
  3. Student demonstrates a pattern of uncooperative behavior and lack of collaboration with others.
  4. Student does not demonstrate empathy for peers, stakeholders, clients, and/or faculty.
  5. Student demonstrates inappropriate professional relationships and/or is unable to form and/or sustain relationships with others, as evidenced by poor collaboration, ineffective communication, poor conflict management, etc.
  6. Student is charged or convicted with a law violation that may impact their capacity for future professional practice.
  7. Student does not demonstrate an understanding of social work values and ethics and/or how they relate to personal values, as evidenced by an unwillingness to incorporate professional values and ethics in their social work practice, an inability to separate personal and professional values, and/or a willingness to violate the NASW Code of Ethics.
  8. Student does not complete and/or maintain program requirements as defined in this handbook.
  9. Student fails to successfully complete field placement (generalist or advanced).
    - a) Successful completion of field placement is determined based on completion of the learning contract, completion of required hours and/or completion of requirements set forth by the placement, task supervisor, Field Instructor, and/or Field Director/Liaison.
  10. Student does not demonstrate a commitment to their academic success, as evidenced by not attending class sessions as required, a pattern of late or incomplete assignment submissions or non-submissions, and/or not completing other course requirements as assigned.
  11. Student does not demonstrate a basic skill set required of advanced social work practitioners, as evidenced by an inability to complete written work to a minimum standard, inability to demonstrate practice-based skills to an adequate level, and/or other such concerns.

3. Gatekeeping Process – Professional Performance
  - a. Each semester, the MSW Program faculty will review the status of students in the program. Students who present specific concerns will be reviewed by the Graduate Social Work Executive Council (GSWEC). The GSWEC review will include a discussion of academic performance and fit with the profession as outlined above, as well as the student’s overall commitment to the program. The GSWEC may request a meeting with the student in order to gather relevant information. All discussions related to student’s status in the program are confidential.
  - b. Based on the review, students may receive a written warning, may be placed on probation, or may be dismissed from the program.
    1. Written Warning: Students who receive a warning will be contacted in writing by their advisor. This written warning will include the reasons for receiving the warning, as well as specific recommendations for improvement and the indicators of recommended improvement. If improvements are not demonstrated in the timeframe dictated in the written warning, students will be placed on probation. If an additional written warning is warranted, the student will automatically be placed on probation.
    2. Probation: Students placed on probation will be required to meet with their advisor, where specific feedback and guidelines and indicators for improvement will be provided. If improvements are not demonstrated within the established timeframe, students will be dismissed from the program. Students who are on probation who receive additional written warnings for distinctly different concerns may be dismissed from the program or may be allowed to continue on probation, at the discretion of the GSWEC.
    3. Dismissal from the Program: Depending on the severity of the concerns, GSWEC may progress past the warning stage or the probation stage of the above-described process and initiate dismissal. All students facing dismissal will have the opportunity to meet with the GSWEC prior to a final dismissal decision being made.
      - a) Students wishing to be reinstated to the MSW program must “sit-out” for at least one year and then will be allowed to reapply.
      - b) Students may request an appeal of the dismissal decision in writing to the Dean of Graduate Programs. This request must be submitted within five business days of receiving the notification of the GSWEC’s decision. All appeals will be reviewed by the Dean of Graduate Programs, in consultation with the MSW Program Director.

## 11. Background Checks

Although the NWU MSW Program does NOT conduct background checks or review records in the Nebraska Child Abuse and Neglect Central Register/Adult Abuse and Neglect Central Registry, Nebraska Wesleyan University requires that any student

having contact with vulnerable populations complete a background check. Therefore, all names of students approved to begin their practicum are submitted to the Assistant Vice President of Human Resources for a background check.

Students should be aware that their ability to become Certified Master Level Social Workers and/or Licensed Mental Health Practitioners may be compromised depending on the extent of any criminal records. These decisions are made on a case-by-case basis by the State of Nebraska. Questions regarding this should be directed to the Department of Health and Human Services. The NWU Human Resource Department handles processing of all background checks and analysis of the results. If a student fails the background check, the Field Director will be notified, the student's case will be reviewed, and a decision will be made accordingly.

Furthermore, if a student has any current or prior criminal convictions or pending criminal charges (other than minor traffic violations) that could result in conviction and/or if the student has a record that would appear on a review of the child abuse/neglect or sex offender registry, the student is required to report such actions to the Department Chair, Field Director, and their advisor immediately. This information will be used to help assist the student in planning for the future, in determining fit of the profession, and/or in determining appropriate field placement options. **Please Note: Receipt of new charges/convictions while a student in the program could impact program progression.**

## 12. Student Advising

Each MSW student will be supported by an assigned faculty advisor and a NWU staff advisor. Both advisors will work together to ensure student needs are met. Faculty advisors are intended to assist students with academic planning as well as professional development (field education planning, preparing for post-career goals, licensing preparation, etc.). Students are required to meet with their faculty advisor at least one time per semester. Advisors may require additional meetings as needed in order to assist students with their academic and professional development.

Faculty advisors are responsible for monitoring student progression through the program and the completion of program requirements, as well as ongoing professional development.

A request for a new faculty advisor can be made to the MSW Program Director. Please note that a change in advisors will occur only in extreme circumstances.

### 1. Academic Advising

- a. Upon admittance to the university, students will work with a NWU staff advisor to orient to the institution and enroll in their initial classes. The NWU advisor will consult with the MSW Program Director on course selection for each student.
- b. Faculty Advisors are assigned once students are enrolled in classes in the program. Students will be notified of their advisor assignment via email.



2. Professional Advising
  - a. Faculty Advisors are assigned once students are enrolled in classes in the program. Students will be notified of their advisor assignment via email.
  - b. Professional advising occurs in academic advising appointments and may occur in other formal and informal interactions with students outside of these appointments.

### **13. Grievance Process**

When a student has a grievance regarding any aspect of the MSW program, they are to implement the following steps:

1. If the grievance is with another student in the program, students are instructed to first attempt to work out the issue with the student utilizing their social work skills. If this effort fails, the student is encouraged to bring the issue to his or her social work faculty advisor for assistance in problem-solving.
2. If the grievance is with a classroom professor or their social work faculty advisor, students are instructed to work out the issue with their professor or faculty advisor. If this effort fails, the student is encouraged to bring the issue to their social work faculty advisor, MSW Program Director, or the Department Chair, as appropriate.
3. If the student has exercised steps 1–3 without satisfaction, the student may request a meeting with the GSWEC in an effort to resolve the issue.
4. If the student is not satisfied with the judgment of the GSWEC, then the student may take the case to the Dean of Graduate Programs.

#### Documentation of Student Complaints and Grievances

Student complaints submitted to faculty and/or the MSW Program Director will be shared with the Department Chair and will be recorded by the Department Chair and stored in an on-line recordkeeping system.

## Pathways to Program Completion

### Progression Option #1 for a Student Starting Full-Time in the Generalist Year

YEAR ONE	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5000: History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK: 5100: Anti- Oppressive Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5010: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK: 5230: Research Informed Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Spring	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK: 5110: Social Welfare Policy (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5200: Micro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5210: Group Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5220: Macro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Summer	SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr) SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr) SOCWK: 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)		
YEAR TWO	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK: 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5330: The Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–3 cr)</li> </ul>	
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr)*		
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics &amp; Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–5 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Summer	SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (3–10 cr) SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr)		

**\*Must complete SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum prior to starting SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum**

**Progression Option #2 for a Student Starting Full-Time in the Generalist Year**

YEAR ONE	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5000: History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK: 5100: Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5010: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK: 5230: Research Informed Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Spring	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK: 5110: Social Welfare Policy (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5200: Micro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5210: Group Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5220: Macro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr)		
	Summer	SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr)		
YEAR TWO	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK: 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK: 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5330: The Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
			SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr)*	
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics &amp; Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>• SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Summer	SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–10 credit hours) SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2 cr) SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1cr)		

**Progression Option #1 for a Student Starting Part-Time in the Generalist Year**

		1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
YEAR ONE	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5000: History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5010: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5100: Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5230: Research Informed Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5200: Micro Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR TWO	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5210: Group Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5220: Macro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr)	
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5110: Social Welfare Policy (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr)	
	Summer	SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr)	
YEAR THREE	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR FOUR	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2 cr)	
		SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–5 cr)	
	Summer	SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1-10)	
		SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1cr)	

**Progression Option #2 for a Student Starting Part-Time in the Generalist Year**

		1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
YEAR ONE	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5000: History and Philosophy of Social Work in the United States (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5010: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 cr)</li> </ul>

	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5100: Anti-Oppressive Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5230: Research Informed Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5200: Micro Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR TWO	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5210: Group Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5220: Macro Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr)	
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social Welfare Policy (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
		SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (1–4 cr)	
Summer	SOCWK 5270: Field Practicum (4–8 cr) SOCWK 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)		
YEAR THREE	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR FOUR	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (2 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1-4 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr) SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (4-10 cr)	

**Progression Option #1 for a Student Starting Full-Time in the Specialized Year**

<b>YEAR ONE</b>	Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5300: Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)</li> </ul>	
	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–5 cr)*</li> <li>SOCWK 5580: Capstone 1 (2 cr)*</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr) SOCWK 5590: Advanced Field Practicum (4–10 cr)	

\*Optional start of SOCWK 5570 depending on the type of placement sought (e.g., school-based setting); MUST take SOCWK 5580 when begin Advanced field practicum

**Progression Option #2 for a Student Starting Full-Time in the Specialized Year (with Advanced Standing)**

<b>YEAR ONE</b>	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5300: Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–5 cr)*</li> <li>SOCWK 5580: Capstone 1 (2 cr)*</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2cr) SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr) SOCWK 5590: Advanced Field Practicum (5–10 cr)	

**Progression Option #1 for a Student Starting Part-Time in the Specialized Year  
(with Advanced Standing) (RECOMMENDED)**

YEAR ONE	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR TWO	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2 cr) SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1–5 cr)	
	Summer	SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr) SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (5–10 cr)	

**Progression Option #2 for a Student Starting Part-Time in the Specialized Year  
(with Advanced Standing)**

	Summer	SOCWK 5300: The Nature of Trauma and Traumatic Experiences (3 cr)	
YEAR ONE	Fall	1 <sup>st</sup> Term	2 <sup>nd</sup> Term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5310: Theories for Advanced Social Work Practice (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5330: Assessment and Treatment of Trauma (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5450: Professional Ethics and Leadership in Social Work (3 cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5320: Advanced Practice with Groups (3 cr)</li> </ul>
	Summer	SOCWK 5340: Social Advocacy in Social Work Practice (3 cr)	
YEAR TWO	Fall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5580: Advanced Integrative Capstone 1 (2cr)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SOCWK 5460: Trauma Conscious Social Work Administration (3 cr)</li> <li>SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (1-4 cr)</li> </ul>
	Spring	SOCWK 5590: Advanced Integrative Capstone 2 (1 cr) SOCWK 5570: Advanced Field Practicum (4-10 cr)	

## Program Philosophy on Wellness and Well-Being

NWU MSW Program faculty and staff recognize the stress that graduate education can add to anyone's life. As a result, we encourage all students to regularly practice strategies that promote their overall wellness and well-being. This could include taking care of yourself physically (exercising or eating right), taking care of yourself emotionally (journaling or seeking the

services of a licensed clinical practitioner), taking care of yourself spiritually (prayer or meditation), and taking care of yourself socially (spending time with friends or family). Additionally, being intentional in your daily practices (time management and organization) can assist us in reducing the impact of regular stressors. As a program we recognize that any plan for wellness must be supported by a community, so we look forward to supporting you as you develop these key skills.

If you have questions or would like help in creating your own personal wellness plan, please reach out to your academic advisor or the MSW Program Director.

A listing of self-care resources can be found below:

- Self-Care Plans: <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>
- Stress-relief and Self-Care Apps: (Calm, Headspace, Happify) <https://www.calm.com/> , <https://www.headspace.com/headspace-meditation-app> , <https://www.happify.com/>
- Positive Self-Talk (Thinkup): <https://thinkup.me/>