



# **Social Work Program Student Handbook**



Watercolor by Nikki Kinne

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Dear Student,

Welcome to the UAF Social Work Program! We are pleased you have chosen social work as a major and a career. This handbook has been prepared to complement the academic information provided through the main campus website: <http://uaf.edu/>. It is meant to help you understand the program, its mission, goals, requirements and procedures.

In addition to program information, your rights, as well as obligations as a student are outlined. Please read this handbook carefully in order to plan for and maximize your educational experience with us. This manual is posted on our website at <http://www.uaf.edu/socwork/>. Updates to policies and procedures are published online and represent current policy for which students are accountable.

Advising is an important component of the social work program. We urge you to contact a faculty advisor as questions or concerns arise. Your advisor is available to assist you in planning your progress throughout the program.

I encourage you to make the most of your years with us by becoming active in the student social work organizations and larger community. We look forward to working with you and sharing your journey into the social work profession.

Best wishes for a successful educational experience.

Sincerely,

Retchenda George Bettisworth, DSW, MSW  
Department Chair, Clinical Professor

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- A) Glossary of Terms
- B) Suggested Curriculum Guide

# **I. Social Work Faculty and Staff Contact Information**

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## **II. University of Alaska Fairbanks**

### **Mission of UAF**

*The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public service as it educates students for active citizenship and prepares them for lifelong learning and careers.*

## **II. Baccalaureate Social Work Program**

### **A. Mission and Goals of the Social Work Department**

*Rooted in core social work values, we educate generalist social work practitioners to promote the health and well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, emphasizing the diversity and uniqueness of rural Alaska, as it interconnects with our global society. We are committed to creating a community of critical thinkers dedicated to becoming competent, culturally grounded, and environmentally conscious professionals engaged in lifelong learning and research that honors diverse ways of knowing.*

We are committed to creating a community of critical thinkers dedicated to becoming competent, culturally grounded, and environmentally conscious professionals engaged in lifelong learning. We prepare students:

1. For generalist social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. To integrate the values and ethics of the social work profession into generalist practice and apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments
3. To engage diversity in generalist practice to advance human rights and advocate for social, economic, and environmental justice
4. To understand bio-psycho-social, spiritual, and cultural functioning and apply it to all client systems.
5. To conduct research and scholarship, with an emphasis on the circumpolar North that contributes to individual and community well-being.
6. To become global citizens who advocate for and promote environmental sustainability.

The mission of the Social Work Department is influenced by the mission of the University of

Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), and the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) (See Appendix B). Social Work is a department within the UAF College of Liberal Arts.

## B. Historical Context

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) granted candidacy status for accreditation in 1984. Accreditation was granted in 1985 and reaffirmed in 1994, 2001, 2009, 2015, and 2024.

In addition to the campus-based model, a statewide distance delivered model was developed in 1999 as an integral part of the overall social work program to assist in fulfilling the mission of service to rural Alaska. The statewide rural cohort distance delivery model was developed in 2000. In 2018 the social work department changed to a fully online/distance program and accepts students from around the globe.

## C. Delivery Methods

The UAF BASW program has two primary modes of delivery: Distance Delivery and Rural Cohort. These are only distinguished by the delivery method, the programming is exactly the same.

**Distance Delivery** courses are delivered online asynchronous, and/or with synchronous video conferencing through Zoom. The social work program is available globally, but has an emphasis in Rural Social Work Practice and Indigenous Communities in Alaska.

**Rural Cohort** is a distance delivery model specific to rural Alaska students, who are either working in or have paraprofessional experience in social services. The students meet in Fairbanks for a week at the beginning of each semester and an additional three days at the end of the semester for intensive face-to-face classroom instruction. In between these intensive meeting periods, the class meets weekly Zoom conference sessions.

The focus of this type of course delivery is to “grow our own” practitioners. Instead of a revolving door of well-intentioned practitioners who rotate in and out of rural Alaska in a year or less, these “homegrown” practitioners live in the rural communities themselves, know the community intimately, and are committed to staying.

This model allows rural students to form a bond among fellow classmates, building a network of professional and personal support across Alaska that may not occur in traditional distance delivery modalities. Additionally, students receive course instruction not only from the university

instructor during the face-to-face intensives, but also from Alaska Native Elders, thus incorporating both western and traditional approaches to learning.

This mode of delivery has been highly successful, due in part to the fact that the majority of students can start by working to complete their Certificate in Rural Human Services (RHS), which then articulates into their two-year degree in Human Services (HUMS), and then they move on to complete their four-year degree in Social Work. These incremental steps and achievements of success help propel these rural students to the next level of educational attainment. This method is also called the Behavioral Health Pathway. Though it is not required to enter through the behavioral health pathway, it is preferred.

The cohort is a separate application process, and if interested please contact the Statewide Cohort Coordinator for more information.

## D. Educational Policy Statement

The Commission of Accreditation (COA) of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is responsible for establishing standards and conducting accreditation reviews, which stimulate improvement in professional social work education and encourage graduates to meet the changing demands of professional practice. The standards pertain to the organization, administration, and curriculum implementation of social work educational programs. Curriculum standards are derived from the *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) of CSWE* (See Appendix B).

EPAS describes four features of an integrated curriculum design: (1) program mission and goals; (2) explicit curriculum; (3) implicit curriculum; and (4) assessment. The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards are conceptually linked. Educational Policy describes each curriculum feature. Accreditation Standards are derived from the Educational Policy and specify the requirements used to develop and maintain an accredited social work program at the baccalaureate level.

The infused competencies and specific courses taught build upon a liberal arts foundation and are logically related and linked to each other both horizontally and vertically through course sequencing, and relate directly to our mission, goals and objectives of our program.

Students, along with adjunct faculty and Agency Field Instructors, are encouraged to read and become familiar with the contents of the Educational Policy and the Accreditation Standards included in this manual.



## E. Generalist Practice Definition

The social work curriculum prepares graduates for entry-level generalist social work practice through the mastery of the nine core competencies. The Program has adopted the definition of generalist practice from the Council on Social Work Education as follows:

“Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice.” (CSWE, 2022, p.17).

## F. Core Competencies and Practice Behaviors

The curriculum for the UAF Social Work Program is guided by nine core social work competencies. The competencies reflect the standards of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and the UAF Social Work Program's Mission and Goals. Competency-based education rests on a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice situations in a culturally responsive purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being ([CSWE, 2022, p.7](#)).

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) *Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards* (EPAS) identifies nine social work competencies that students are expected to be proficient in upon graduation from an accredited social work program. Below are the competencies specific to this course.

Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that make up the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, and the descriptions that precede them represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

### **Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior**

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

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

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

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

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

## **Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice**

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

## **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **IV. Curriculum**

### **A. Liberal Arts Foundation**

The social work curriculum is built on a liberal arts foundation, which enriches the understanding of the person-in-environment context of professional social work practice, provides an understanding of cultural diversity, and provides the opportunity for thinking critically about society, people, and their problems.

Students acquire the foundation in the freshman and sophomore years. The university numbering system is a good guide to follow: 100-level courses are taken in the freshman year; 200-level, the second year, etc. Nearly all SWK designated courses, except SWK 103, (Introduction to Social Work) and SWK 220 (Ethics, Values and Practice), are at the 300 and 400 levels. The following

prerequisites: SOC 101X or ANTH 100X, PSY 101, and ANTH/ANS 242 must be taken in the freshman and sophomore years. These courses lay the foundation of social sciences and Alaska Native culture and history that is necessary in the upper division social work courses. These courses also fulfill general education requirements.

## B. University Core Curriculum

The core curriculum, which is part of the liberal arts base, is well suited for preparation as a professional social worker. The general education core communication courses are essential for social workers since communication skills are “tools in trade.” Students would be well advised to sharpen their writing and oral skills since social workers often are required to write and present reports to colleagues and the courts and to prepare grant proposals.

The core and liberal arts components comprise approximately 60 hours of coursework, usually completed in the first two years. This includes the areas of communication skills, humanities, social sciences, mathematics and natural or physical science. All prerequisites must be completed prior to starting practice and practicum in the senior year (See Appendix C).

## C. Standardization

Undergraduate curricula offered nationally by accredited social work programs are similar in objectives and content, as is true in other professions, such as nursing, education, and engineering. Standardization allows employers to count on graduates having been exposed to a knowledge base that prepares them to practice anywhere in the country. For those who intend to pursue a Master of Social Work degree, it may be reassuring to know that some schools offer students an opportunity to waive certain graduate requirements by testing out in some core content areas.<sup>4</sup> Some universities offer an advanced standing program that enables graduates with baccalaureate degrees from accredited social work programs to complete a master’s degree in one year.

UAF graduating seniors perform well on nationally standardized exams measuring social work knowledge, and many graduates go on to graduate programs in social work. Spring semester of the senior year students are asked to take an exit exam as part of meeting national accreditation requirements.

## D. Regional Emphasis

While there is uniformity in social work curricula nationally, each social work program also has an emphasis that reflects its own regional needs. The mission of this campus includes an emphasis on rural concerns and Alaska Native peoples. As a consequence, UAF requires a course in Alaska Native cultures (ANTH/ANS 242) and rural social work practice (SWK 320). In addition, most other courses in the curriculum incorporate content relevant to issues faced in rural Alaska and/or Indigenous communities.

## **E. Professional Foundation (Major)**

The major includes courses at the 200, 300 and 400 level. These courses include content on social work values and ethics, diversity, social and economic justice, populations at-risk, human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field practicum. In general the curriculum strengthens the student's understanding and appreciation of a scientific, analytical approach to building knowledge for the delivery and evaluation of practice.

A central feature of the social work program that distinguishes it from a purely academic major is the opportunity for direct "hands on" practice in community agencies. In the senior year students complete a 400-hour field practicum placement in a community agency serving clients and client groups, under supervision of a social worker. The field practicum placement affords students the opportunity to develop intervention and practice skills for beginning generalist social work practice.

CSWE accreditation standards do not allow the program to offer course credit for prior learning, life or work experience, or volunteering.

## **V. Declaring a Social Work Major**

### **A. Admission to the Major**

Matriculating freshman students are allowed to declare a major in social work if they graduated from high school and their records reflect at least an overall grade point average (GPA) of 2.5. (See UAF Catalog: Admission Requirements).

Transfer students are eligible to declare a social work major if they are accepted by the university and have a 2.0 GPA from their previous college or university. Students who seek to transfer in social work courses must have those courses reviewed and approved by the department head, and

present a GPA of 2.5 or higher in social work courses.

Currently matriculated students may declare a major in social work at any time as long as a GPA of 2.0 is maintained.

***It is important that each student who declares a social work major be aware that doing so in no way ensures that the student will be admitted to the field practicum or become eligible to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Social Work.***

To remain in the program students must maintain a 2.5 GPA overall and receive a grade of “C-” or better in all the required courses for the major. Students who fail to earn a grade of “C-” or higher are required to retake the course. To declare your major, contact the Office of the Registrar.

Students are required to declare a Minor at UAF when pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree (See UAF Catalog: Minors). To declare your minor you must fill out the “Declaration of Minor” form available on the Office of the Registrar’s webpage, under “Student Forms”.

## B. Academic Advising

All social work faculty serve as academic advisors for majors in the program, and students may work with the faculty of their choice. It is essential that each student talk with a social work advisor when first declaring a major. Utilizing *UA Online Degree Works* degree auditing program, and the Suggested Curriculum Guide (Appendix C), the advisor will assist the student to outline a plan for taking courses directed to a degree in social work and graduation.

Students are required to talk with their faculty advisors each semester during the pre-registration period to review the student’s Degree Works profile to assure that the course of study continues to follow the proper sequence.

Most of the courses in the major have prerequisites, including the senior field practicum. Being out of sequence could delay graduation a full year. Field Practicum begins fall semester only. The Curriculum Guide can help students plan what courses to take and when. It is important to refer to the UAF Catalog as course prerequisites are based on the year of admission to the university.

Spring semester of the junior year students should request a graduation audit from the Graduation Office to clarify what requirements remain in order to graduate.

Advisors also help students file petitions to substitute required courses completed at another institution. Students should not have to repeat coursework taken elsewhere. Petitions can be found on the Office of the Registrar webpage under “Forms”. Students who meet regularly with their faculty advisors can avoid last minute graduation related problems.

In addition to academic advising, students and faculty develop relationships that further assist students to adjust to the university experience, complete the program and enhance their experience at UAF.

Rural and Alaska Native students may find Rural Student Services (907) 474-7043 to be of additional help.

## C. Students with Special Needs

The social work program supports the profession’s commitment to recognize and serve special populations and in accordance with state and federal law, does not discriminate or deny admission on the basis of disability. In order to give students with visual, learning, motor, or other conditions or learning disabilities special assistance, the program must be cognizant of these needs. Although students are not required to reveal disabilities during the application process, such information will be maintained in confidence and will help the faculty and staff in planning and advising the student.

If students require special assistance, it is suggested that they inform the appropriate faculty, their faculty advisor, Department Chair, and/or the Field Director as soon as possible. Faculty work with the Disability Services Coordinator to provide reasonable accommodation to students with disabilities

Disability Services, (907) 474-7043, (203 Whitaker Building) implements the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and ensures that UAF students have equal access to the campus and course materials. They work with students and instructors to optimize the student-learning environment.

## D. Financial Aid

All financial aid and subsidized loans are allocated and administered through the Financial Aid Office at 107 Eielson Building, [uaf-financialaid@alaska.edu](mailto:uaf-financialaid@alaska.edu), 907-474-7256. You must complete an Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by February 15<sup>th</sup> to be considered for grants

and scholarships in the following academic year. Specific grants and scholarships require additional application forms.

## **E. Scholarships**

The Social Work Department administers two scholarships per academic year. The Dr. Gerald S. Berman Founders Scholarship and the Banarsi Lal Scholarship.

To be eligible for scholarships, students need to complete the FAFSA application and be declared majors in good academic standing. Additionally, the Dr. Gerald S. Berman Founders Scholarship requires active membership with the Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW), and the Banarsi Lal scholarship is awarded for students entering practicum specific who are placed at behavioral health, elders, or substance abuse treatment agencies.

## **VI. Student Rights and Responsibilities**

### **A. Student Conduct**

The goal of the University of Alaska Social Work Department is to prepare students for the professional practice of social work. The faculty has the responsibility for determining whether students have demonstrated the required level of academic performance, professional behavior, and ethical behavior sufficient to interact positively with all client systems. Faculty therefore also have the responsibility to identify students who are not meeting acceptable standards of academic, professional, and ethical conduct and seek, when possible, a way to remedy problems that are identified. The following information is provided to clarify and clearly state the expectations of students in this program.

Students must maintain good academic and honor code standing. If a social work student's performance or actions violate university standards and ethics in the classroom, or the practicum, they may be dismissed from the program.

All students attending UAF are subject to the university's code of conduct. These standards, including the academic honor code, are outlined in the current UAF Catalog, the current Course Schedule, and can be accessed via the UAF website. Students are expected to read the codes of conduct and understand that when they accept enrollment in the university they agree to abide by the student code of conduct.



Because social workers often work with vulnerable people in emotionally sensitive situations, the faculty holds reasonable expectations for student behavior and performance beyond university regulations. The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics serves as a baseline for appropriate behavior. It is reviewed in the introductory class, distributed in SWK 103, SWK 220, SWK 460, and referred to throughout the curriculum.

The following are the *professional behavior expectations* of the UAF social work program. All students are expected to exhibit the following ethical standards of behavior.

1. **Accountability:** Attend class, arrive on time, and return from break in a timely manner. Participate in group activities and assignments at a comparable level to peers. Complete work in a timely fashion and according to directions provided. Come to class prepared, with readings and other homework complete.
2. **Respect:** Treat all your peers, your instructors, and all those with whom you come in contact, with dignity and respect at all times. Listen while others are speaking. Give feedback to peers in a constructive manner. Approach conflict with peers or instructors in a cooperative manner. Use positive and nonjudgmental language. Turn off any electronic devices that might disrupt the classroom environment or at the direction of an instructor.
3. **Confidentiality:** Treat any personal information that you hear about a peer or an instructor or client in an agency as strictly confidential. Maintain any information that is shared in class, dyads or smaller groups within that unit. Use judgment in self-disclosing information of a very personal nature in the classroom. (Class time should not be used as therapy or treatment. If students feel the need to talk about personal issues or struggles, they may consult with their instructor to receive a referral for counseling.) Understand never to use names of clients or disclose other identifying information in the classroom.
4. **Competence:** Apply yourself to all your academic pursuits with seriousness and conscientiousness, meeting all deadlines as given by your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities. Come to class with books, handouts, syllabus, and writing implements. Seek out appropriate support when having difficulties to ensure success in completing course requirements. Take responsibility for the quality of completed tests and assignments. Strive to work toward greater awareness of personal issues that may impede your effectiveness in class or with clients.
5. **Integrity:** Practice honesty with yourself, your peers, and your instructors. Constantly strive to improve your abilities. Academically, commit yourself to learning the rules of citing others work properly. Do your own work and take credit only for your own work. Acknowledge areas where improvement is needed. Accept and benefit from constructive feedback.

6. **Diversity:** Strive to become more open to people, ideas, and beliefs that may be unfamiliar. Embrace diversity. Maintain speech free of racism, sexism, ageism, heterosexism, stereotyping, etc. Use person first descriptions and respect identified pronouns. Exhibit a willingness to serve diverse groups of persons. Demonstrate an understanding of how values and culture interact.
7. **Communication:** Strive to improve both verbal and written communication skills as these skills are used heavily in interactions with clients and peers and also when creating client records. Demonstrate assertive communication with peers and instructors. Practice positive, constructive, respectful and professional communication skills with peers and instructors paying attention to body language, empathy, and active listening.
8. **Social Justice:** Strive to deepen your commitment to social justice for all populations at risk. Demonstrate an understanding of how institutional and personal oppression impede the experience of social justice for groups and individuals. Strive to learn about methods of empowering populations and enhancing social justice at micro, mezzo and macro levels.

## B. Criteria for Student Performance Evaluation and Review

As student's progress through the social work program they will be evaluated on a regular basis by the faculty and staff. In addition to the UAF Student Code of Conduct, the NASW Code of Ethics, and the aforementioned professional behaviors, a student's performance evaluation will include the following behaviors:

1. Active substance abuse.
2. Lying, cheating, or any form of plagiarism in coursework or fieldwork.
3. Impaired performance in the classroom or field. Behaviors include, but are not limited to, being actively suicidal, inability to focus or communicate, distortion in thought processes, or otherwise unable to develop appropriate work relationships in the social work context even though appropriate ADA accommodations may have been provided.
4. Non-disclosure of a felony conviction, or the department becomes aware that the student has been convicted of a crime considered a Barrier Crime in 7AAC10.905 (the Alaska Administrative Code.) See link: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/CL/bgcheck/assets/BarrierCrimeMatrix.pdf>. Some crimes have a barrier that would permanently preclude a student from admission to practicum. Other crimes have a shorter time frame, and the department may determine that a student must wait a specific period of time before admission to the field practicum will be granted. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis, however any Barrier

Crime conviction may result in termination from the major and permanent denial of practicum admission, regardless of the statute time frames.

5. Inadequate interpersonal relationship skills necessary for social work practice, to include the inability to form positive working relationships with faculty, peers, supervisors, and clients.
6. Inadequate written or verbal communication skills, which impede the ability to work with faculty, peers, supervisors, and clients.
7. Excessive absences from class, or field, which are considered predictive of poor professional performance.
8. Persistent inability to meet deadline dates on assignments and projects, suggesting an inability to be dependable and responsible in serving clients.
9. Failure to pass a required course in social work with a “C” or higher.
10. Termination from a practicum placement related to student performance or violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.

## C. Removal from Practicum or Termination from the Major

The aforementioned behaviors affect the student’s ability to make appropriate progress toward graduation and developing competence in professional social work practice. Once any concerning behavior is identified the faculty and staff will engage in the following process to support the student through addressing the concerns.

The UAF Department of Social Work reserves the right to accelerate and adapt this process for serious, dangerous, or egregious situations (e.g. Students actively intoxicated in class or UAF sponsored events, threats of violence to faculty, peers, clients, violations of client confidentiality, etc.)

### **Evaluation of Student Performance: Process and Procedure**

1. If a student’s conduct comes into question, the student’s faculty advisor is alerted so that the matter can be remedied quickly. The adviser will work with the student informally to address the concern.
2. If unsuccessful, the social work faculty as a group will meet with the student and attempt to work out a solution (eg. Student may be referred to a support service offered through UAF, or in the community, the student may be encouraged to consider a different degree program, etc.)
3. If there appears, as is usually the case, a potential for corrective action, the student will be informed, personally and in writing, of the changes requested or actions to be taken

within a specific time period. All corrective action will be documented on an Individual Performance Plan (see Appendix O).

4. If a student's inappropriate behavior warrants a removal from practicum placement, corrective action will be documented in the individual performance plan and the program will assess students ability to complete and find a secondary placement or be advised out of the major. A secondary placement is not guaranteed.
5. If a student's inappropriate behavior warrants a University level intervention, the situation will be referred to the Office of Rights, Compliance, and Accountability for disciplinary action. That recommendation will be taken into consideration by the social work department, as well.
6. Should it become necessary to dismiss the student from the major, the faculty will indicate reasons in a written statement presented to the student.
7. In termination or corrective action, the student has the right to appeal. The student must make the appeal in writing within three working days and include a statement indicating why the faculty action should be rescinded or modified. The faculty will meet within three working days to reconsider or affirm their actions and then notify the student of the decision on appeal.
8. Should the student wish to continue the process, an appeal may be made at levels beyond the department, (i.e., Dean of the college, Provost of the university). Formal hearings can be requested and convened at any level. Students are not penalized for appeals. For more information about appeals go to <https://uaf.edu/csrr/appeals.php> for more Information.
9. If the student does have to leave the major, the faculty advisor will assist in the transfer to another major.

## D. Grade Appeal

The Grade Appeals Policy, passed by the UAF Faculty Senate, exists for students to seek review of final grades “alleged to be arbitrary and capricious.” The procedures are designed to provide a means for students to seek review of final course grades alleged to be arbitrary and capricious. Before taking formal action, a student must attempt to resolve the issue informally with the instructor of the course. A student who files a written request for review under the outlined procedures shall be expected to abide by the final disposition of the review, as provided below, and may not seek further review of the matter under any other procedure within the university. For a copy of the complete procedures, please visit the following UAF Website:

<https://uaf.edu/csrr/grade-appeals/>

## VII. Student Organizations

Fairbanks-based social work students have been organized in student associations since the beginning of the social work program at UAF. The Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW) and the Alaska Native Student Wellness Alliance (ANSWA) are registered campus groups, with officers, regularly scheduled meetings, and available meeting places. The two student organizations maintain close ties and participate in joint projects. Both groups are open to all students, including non-majors who have an interest in human service work. Student participation in these groups provide an opportunity to practice leadership skills and engage in community service projects. The organizations are involved in a wide variety of campus and community activities such as Take Back the Night Rally, Domestic Violence Awareness and Action activities, and various community service projects.

## A. Organization of Student Social Workers

The Organization of Student Social Workers (OSSW) was established as a student organization in the early 1990's. The goals of the organization are to provide a means for students, faculties and professionals to collaborate on social service and awareness projects. The organization provides students the opportunity to develop character, leadership, and professional attitude. Students engage in practical application of advocacy skills and community organizing. Students in OSSW have organized rallies, educational movie nights, fundraising for social service agencies, gift wrapping for foster children on the holidays, and gift drives for the women's shelter.

## B. Alaska Native Student Wellness Alliance

The Alaska Native Student Wellness Alliance (ANSWA) changed from the Alaska Native Social Workers Association in 2023, the original ANSWA had been a student club in the Social Work Department since 1993. The goal of this organization is to promote diversity, awareness of social issues both on the UAF campus and in the community of Fairbanks, to give back through volunteering and community support, and to provide leadership and networking opportunities for social work students. With the name change the mission expanded to include professional wellness practices to support students in academia and beyond. The club invites any and everyone to participate whether they are Alaska Native or not and encourages students to lead the club based on their interests and passion for helping. In recent years ANSWA has implemented a statewide distance component to reach out and include students in the distance portion of the Social Work program through the use of audio/video conferencing capabilities. ANSWA's students have dedicated their time to activities that vary every year. Some of the activities include:: gift bags for elders, marching in the domestic violence events, sending care packages to rural communities that have experienced tragedies, promoting positive cultural

events, hosting a Wellness Room at the Festival of Native Arts, volunteering at local social service agency functions, and fundraising for the ANSWA end of year community potluck celebration.

## C. Phi Alpha Honor Society

The Phi Alpha Honor Society, Kappa Xi Chapter, invites students who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work to apply for membership. The purposes of a national honor society are to provide closer bonds among social work students and to promote humanitarian goals and ideals. Application for the Phi Alpha Honor Society is available in November and due by January 31<sup>st</sup>.

In order to apply students must meet the following requirements:

- Be a declared social work major
- Achieve sophomore status
- Have an overall GPA of 3.0
- Have complete 9 semester hours of required social work courses
- Have an major GPA of 3.25

If accepted into the Phi Alpha Honor Society, induction will be in April.

## VIII: Field Practicum

### A. Purpose of Field Education

Field practicum is an integral part of the social work curriculum. Most students consider their practicum fieldwork to be the most valuable and significant part of their social work education. Students are given the opportunity to learn to think systemically and to develop skills of a professional social worker. The entire curriculum contributes to preparation for social work practice, but it is in the practicum that students face the real challenges and opportunities of professional responsibility and ethical practice.

Practicum is a form of community service that occurs under the direct supervision of a social worker in a social service agency. Agencies are specifically chosen to provide students the opportunity to engage in direct social work practice experiences with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

It is important to note that practicum fieldwork is not meant to be on-the-job training or apprenticeship rather it is an educational process of guided experiential learning designed for a student's personal and professional growth as a social worker. The field practicum is designed to further the mission, goals and objectives of the social work program at UAF in accordance with Council of Social Work Education's guidelines.

### **Practicum Fee:**

During practicum year students will be charged a \$300 Practicum Fee to support the Tevera Practicum Database and support practicum placement needs, a breakdown of cost is as follows:

- o A fee of \$150, applied in fall semesters through the SWK 461 course.
- o A fee of \$150, applied in spring semesters through the SWK 464 course.

## **B. Practicum Requirements**

Practicum requires the senior student to complete a minimum of 400 clock hours in the same community social service agency over the course of two (or three semesters, if needed). The practicum sequence SWK 461 occurs in the fall semester and SWK 464 is scheduled for the spring semester. The total practicum is 12 credit hours, 6 credits per semester, which includes a classroom seminar and approximately 16 hours per week spent in the social service agency applying classroom learning.

Practicum students concurrently enroll in a practice course sequence, SWK 460 in the fall and SWK 463 in the spring. These three credit courses provide content on interventions with individuals, families, groups and communities that enhance the student's knowledge, skills, and experience in real work practice situations.

During practicum students work under the direct supervision of an agency based social worker, or other qualified supervisor approved by the Field Director. Students are required to develop Learning Agreements with their field supervisors that specify student's learning activities within that agency. The learning agreement then serves as criteria for evaluation of the student's progress toward acquiring the CSWE Competencies and Practice Behaviors. The Agency Field Instructor and the Field Director approve the learning agreements. Students are expected to meet weekly for a minimum of one hour of supervision with their agency-based Agency Field Instructor.

Some students feel that the practice and practicum sequence is a heavy load, even for persons who do not work part-time or have family responsibilities. Students may find it necessary to

reduce their hours of employment during the practicum year. In addition, the policy in the program is that students should not take more than 15 credit hours of coursework each semester during the practicum year.

## C. Placement Procedure

Students submit the ***Field Practicum Application*** through ***Tevera*** at the end of the fall semester prior to their senior year. Assignment to a practicum site typically occurs in the spring semester, but it may take all summer to identify an appropriate placement match for the student. A student's previous experience, learning needs, interests, and goals are considered. A variety of approved practicum sites are available for students to choose from. Attempts are made to ensure that the student's placement will meet their learning expectations, and the requirements of the Social Work Department, while at the same time supporting and advancing the mission and goals of the community agency.

Fall Semester before the senior year students are provided applications for Field Practicum. Students are added to the online system we use to track practicum, called Tevera. Students will receive login information and directions on how to use Tevera. Applications are done through this site, and it is utilized throughout the student's practicum year. Once added, students have lifetime access to Tevera. The entire UAF Social Work Program faculty and staff meet as an admissions committee to review all applications and to make decisions and recommendations on which students will be accepted into practicum for the following academic year.

In order to apply for practicum, students must have:

1. Junior status at time of application and review.
2. A minimum of 75 university credits, which then allows them to graduate by the end of the practicum year.
3. Completed all course work in the major except the senior level (practicum and practice courses).
4. Maintain a GPA of 3.0 in social work courses and a GPA of 2.5 overall.
5. Demonstrated a capacity to relate to others, and a commitment to social work values.
6. Met with their advisor to discuss readiness, and apply for practicum by the deadline.

Upon acceptance in the practicum, students receive a confirmation letter (via email) from the Field Director. Students then schedule individual appointments with the Field Director to discuss the results of the admissions committee's review and the student's placement choices. The placement discussion takes into account employment, volunteer work, life experiences, interests, and goals. Placing a student in a particular agency with a particular supervisor is an intricate



process. It involves an assessment of individual student strengths, needs, and student preferences for working with certain client populations, and a match with an agency that can provide the necessary learning experiences. Assignment to a practicum site typically occurs in the spring semester, but it may take all summer to identify an appropriate placement match for the student.

Students are directed not to shop around or contact agencies prior to the placement process. If students have an interest in an agency that is not currently approved they should contact the Field Director who will instigate the appropriate process.

The Field Director contacts the agency, giving the name of the interested student. If the agency expresses interest in accepting a practicum placement, the Field Director requests the student contact the agency. The student then contacts the agency and schedules an interview. The interview allows both the student and the agency the opportunity to clarify expectations and determine mutual suitability. Once the agency agrees to accept the student and the student accepts the placement, the agency must sign the UAF Affiliation Agreement. This written agreement describes general responsibilities of each party involved in the practicum experience.

Students may not get their first choice of agency, or placement type. The faculty at UAF will do their best to locate a “best fit” placement for each student accepted into the field practicum. This decision will be based on the availability of appropriate support, guidance, and supervision in the placement agency. The UAF Social Work Program cannot guarantee finding a placement for some students in certain circumstances. If a placement cannot be located for a student in their home community, creative placements may be explored. However, if the Field Director cannot locate and secure a placement for a student by the course drop deadline, the student will likely receive an incomplete (I) grade, or be asked to reapply to practicum the following year.

In the unlikely event that a match is not considered suitable, additional interviews are scheduled with other possible agencies. If personnel from **three** different agencies are unwilling to accept a student for placement, the student may be referred to the head of the Social Work Department to evaluate whether the student is ready for practicum. This also applies if a student declines placement opportunities offered.

If an agency accepts a student but the program is unable to ensure the student will have adequate support, guidance, and mentoring from a MSW or BSW level Agency Field Instructor, the program reserves the right to not move forward with placing a student at said agency.

## D. Special Requests

Occasionally students make special requests that are outside of the regular practicum format. The most frequent requests are for block placements, extensions into summer practicum, placements where the student is employed, and placement at ‘for profit’ agencies. Each request is reviewed to evaluate the student’s educational needs and will only be approved if the exception can ensure educational integrity. The individual student’s professional growth and development opportunities must be equal to or greater than other placement options. More specific information on special requests can be found in the Field Practicum Manual.

## E. Out-of-State Placements and International Placement Requests

### *Application to Practicum by Out of State Students*

All out of state students will be required to apply for admission into practicum through the program’s standard application process. Admission into practicum does not guarantee that the Field Director will be able to secure a practicum out of state. We will attempt to identify appropriate placements, but despite our best efforts, we may not be able to place students in all circumstances outside Alaska. All placements are made at the discretion of the Field Director.

### *International Placement Requests*

All potential placements must meet the department and accreditation criteria for placement and be approved by the Field Director. Students expressing an interest in an international placement for practicum need to consider the following information. The mission of the UAF Social Work Program is focused on the diversity and uniqueness of rural Alaska. While students are welcome to research possible international placement for practicum, the program has no resources to support international placements at this time. The UAF Social Work Program reserves the right to not approve an international placement request at any time.

In order to be considered for an international placement students must complete the following:

1. Apply and be accepted to UAF Study Abroad
2. Apply and be accepted into a CSWE accredited university exchange program willing to assist with the international placement
3. Provide substantial documentation regarding appropriate practicum instruction
4. Provide UAF Social Work Program with course descriptions for the practice/practicum series from the institution of their choice in order to ensure courses will be transferable into the UAF system.
5. Indicate intent in writing of seeking international placement one year (1) Prior to Practicum application deadline **(2 yrs prior to practicum occurring)**.

## F. Stipends

Most agencies do not provide financial assistance. Students are individually responsible to arrange resources sufficient to complete their education.

## G. Scholarships

There are scholarships specifically designated for social work students. To be eligible for these scholarships students must complete the application process through the Financial Aid Office. Your social work advisor has current information on these programs.

## H. Professional Social Work Licensing

Bachelor of Social Work graduates of the University of Alaska Fairbanks are eligible to apply for licensure through the State of Alaska Division of Corporations, Business and Professional Licensing. Successful applicants must pass an exam to receive a Baccalaureate Social Work License (LBSW) from the Board of Social Work Examiners.

Students outside of the State of Alaska should look into their specific state statutes and regulations regarding social work licensure. In states that have a BSW level license with eligibility being a BSW from an accredited program, students graduating from this program will meet that as our program is accredited by the CSWE.

### Additional Links

- Alaska Board of Social Work:  
<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/professionallicensing/socialworkexaminers.aspx>
- Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) EPAS 2022:  
<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/2022epas/>
- NASW Code of Ethics 2021:  
<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- UAF Code of Conduct: <https://www.uaf.edu/csrr/student-conduct/>
- ASWB Licensing and Regulation:  
<https://www.aswb.org/licensees/about-licensing-and-regulation/>
- ASWB List of Licensing State Boards Information:  
<http://aswbsocialworkregulations.org/licensingWebsitesReportBuilder.jsp>