

Western Michigan University
School of Social Work
Common Student Handbook

This handbook includes policies affecting both undergraduate and graduate students in social work programs at all campuses. Additional information on policies affecting only undergraduate or only graduate students are listed in separate handbooks.

ACCREDITATION

In conformance with the requirements of the Council on Social Work Education, the School of Social Work has met the evaluative standards for accreditation of both the Bachelor of Social Work and Master of Social Work programs. The Council on Social Work Education is the authorized professional accrediting body for social work education in the United States. The Council has set forth a curriculum policy statement, which specifies certain content areas on which all social work education programs are required to build their curricula to provide social work students with a professional foundation. A copy of the Accreditation Standards and Procedures Manual is located in the office of the Director of the School of Social Work, 4434 CHHS, Western Michigan University.

In conformance with the requirements of the Council on Social Work Education, the School of Social Work does not grant social work course credit nor field hours for life experience or previous work experience.

INTRODUCTION

From the Office of Admissions and Student Services

Welcome to the Western Michigan University School of Social Work (SSW). As you progress toward your social work degree, we hope that you will make use of the Office of Admissions and Student Services, located on the fourth floor of the CHHS building. The office has the following areas of responsibility: undergraduate and graduate admissions; assistance with registration problems; School of Social Work scholarships and emergency loan awards; student records, and coordination of academic advising.

We enjoy working with students and look forward to helping you and hope to create an environment where you can fully maximize your educational experience.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

School of Social Work Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles

Mission

Our core purpose:

Western Michigan University School of Social Work educates social workers to advocate for social and economic justice and personal well-being for all people. The faculty provides leadership on a local, national, and international level through research, scholarship, community service and partnerships, and other creative activities relevant to the profession.

Vision

We seek to be a school that:

- strengthens students' critical thinking skills, helps them formulate a vision of a just society, and enables them to move towards the realization of their vision
- prepares ethical, competent, reflective practitioners to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, communities, and institutions within a global and changing environment
- fosters sensitivity to diversity, cultural competence, and practice effectiveness
- is a nurturing, respectful, inclusive environment that maximizes the contributions and development of students, faculty, and staff

Guiding Principles

We believe in:

- facilitating excellence in professional education
- integrating theory and practice
- conducting research on best practices that foster solutions to community needs
- participating in and seeking out mutually collaborative relationships
- ensuring professional competence through gate-keeping and bridge-building activities
- understanding and intervening within a person-centered ecological model
- evaluating educational outcomes, skills, knowledge, and values
- creating a student-centered educational environment
- maintaining a commitment to life-long professional learning for faculty, staff, and alumni
- preparing social workers to advocate for social justice

The Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare

The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare is an international publication housed in the School of Social Work at Western Michigan University. The Journal's mission is to promote the understanding of social welfare by applying social science knowledge, methodology and technology to problems of social policy, politics, the social ecology, and social services. It also features an outstanding book review section as a regular feature of each issue.

Since its first printing in 1974, JSSW has published articles on such topics as social change, gender, race, homelessness, social welfare history, cultural diversity, international social welfare, and the social dimensions of health and mental health. It is published quarterly in March, June, September, and December. At least one issue in every year is dedicated to a special theme. For example, in December 2016, JSSW published a special issue on Mind-Body Interventions in Social Work Practice with Guest Editors Yvonne Unrau and Melinda McCormick.

The Editorial Board includes outstanding scholars such as Mimi Abramowitz, Richard M. Grinnell, Jr., Alice K. Johnson, Wilma Peebles-Wilkins, James Midgley, and John Tropman. Robert D. Leighninger, Jr., serves as Editor, Melinda McCormick serves as Managing Editor, and Jason L. Powell serves as International Editor. The Book Review Editors are Daniel Liechty and Fei Sun. JSSW is indexed and abstracted in the Applied Social Sciences Index and Abstracts, Elsevier Bibliographic Databases, Psychological Abstracts, Social Work Research & Abstracts, and Sociological Abstracts.

The School of Social Work Non-Discrimination and Human Diversity Policy

1. As faculty in the School of Social Work at Western Michigan University, we declare our support for institutional equity. We subscribe to the institutional equity policies of the university and believe that they are essential in promoting equal access to education, improving the quality of education for all students, and contributing to equality of opportunity in the society at large.

2. The School of Social Work will comply with all applicable laws regarding institutional equity and equal opportunity. The school will not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, age, color, national origin, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, handicap or Veteran's status in its educational programs, activities, admissions, or employment practices.

[School of Social Work Office Directory](#)

[Academic Calendars](#)

About your BroncoNet ID:

The BroncoNet ID Card will be your University ID for as long as you are a student at Western Michigan University. Your BroncoNet ID Card is also your access card for library, dining areas, Student Recreation Center, computer centers and security access card for buildings on campus. Your BroncoNet ID Card enables you to ride the Metro Bus Service on any route around the Kalamazoo area.

If you experience a break in your academic career (e.g., a term or year off), you should retain your original BroncoNet ID Card, as it is still an official ID card. If you complete your undergraduate degree and enter graduate studies at the University, your original BroncoNet ID Card is still valid.

If you are a new student you will receive a letter from the Admissions Office with your BroncoNet ID, WIN (Western Identification Number), e-mail address and temporary password. Your temporary password *must* be changed before using your BroncoNet ID to access WMU services. You can change your password [here](#).

If you are on main campus you can obtain your BroncoNet ID and a temporary password by swiping your Bronco/WMU ID card at one of these card swipe locations:

- [CAE Center](#), Parkview Campus
- On the second floor of the University Computing Center (next to Waldo Library)
- [Registrar's Office](#), Room 3210 Seibert Administration Building

If you are at a branch campus and have a BroncoNet ID, but do not know what it is, or what your password is, you may obtain your BroncoNet ID or password by:

- Contacting your local Branch Campus,
- Contacting the Account Coordinator — you will receive a response in one to two business days, or
- Swiping your Bronco/WMU ID card at one of the above Kalamazoo card swipe locations.

If you DO NOT have a BroncoNet ID:

- Contact your local Branch Campus,
- Submit an account application - you will receive your BroncoNet ID via USPS mail, or
- Swipe your Bronco/WMU ID card at one of the above Kalamazoo card swipe locations.

For more information about your BroncoNet ID Card visit [here](#).

Registration

Problem Areas in Registration

All students can access their current registration and billing in the GoWMU portal. This portal can be found on the WMU home page at <http://www.wmich.edu>. In order to access your student records, you need to know your BroncoNet ID and password. This information is sent to all new students with their admission confirmation from the University.

If you owe any money to the University or have any other restrictions on your registration, the Customer Account Services Office will place your course registration on “hold” status until you satisfy your obligation. Your course registration will be canceled on the payment deadline if the obligation is not met. Registration is withheld by the Customer Account Services Office because of outstanding debts, i.e., past due student rent, parking tickets, and tuition from previous semesters. **The School of Social Work cannot register any student who has a hold on their account.**

Drop/Add

You may add or drop courses anytime the system is available during the drop/add period for the semester. See the [academic calendar](#) for specific dates and late add/drop fees.

Resources

Financial Aid

<http://www.wmich.edu/finaid/>

Student Loans

<https://wmich.edu/finaid/loans>

Employment Opportunities

<http://www.wmich.edu/career/students>

School of Social Work Scholarships

<http://www.wmich.edu/socialwork/scholarships/>

School of Social Work Short-term Loan Program

In addition to the WMU Short-term Loan Program, there are short-term loans available through the School of Social Work designated for social work students only. The maximum amount of a loan is \$500.00 but may be increased in emergency situations. While the Financial Aid Office administers these accounts, the School of Social Work Manager of Recruitment and Outreach must authorize all requests.

Eligibility requirements specify that you must be a degree-seeking student, and that you have **no outstanding financial obligations to the University**. A promissory note must be signed for the full amount of the loan. Delinquency in the repayment will prevent you from registering for courses until the amount due is paid. You can find the loan application at www.wmich.edu/socialwork/forms. Loans are granted on a first-come first-served basis. Once the application is approved, the loan can usually be processed within two business days.

WMU Policy on Course Grade Appeals and Procedures

The grade appeal process is used when you wish to appeal a final course grade that has been recorded by the Registrar on your academic record for reasons other than charges of violations of academic honesty and/or conduct in research policies. What this means is a grade appeal cannot be made in response to a grade penalty assessed as a result of an official finding of responsibility for

academic dishonesty. This finding will have been made through the procedures provided in the [university academic honesty policy](#). You can find the course grade appeal process [here](#).

Grade appeals or other complaints based on charges of discrimination or sexual harassment should be taken to the Office of Institutional Equity or other office(s), pursuant to other University policies and procedures which can be found [here](#).

All information about grade appeals can be found at the Ombudsman's website at the following link: <http://www.wmich.edu/ombudsman/>

Circumstances may arise which may prevent an instructor from assigning a grade in a timely manner. In such instances, the academic unit chair/director will make reasonable efforts to contact and ask the instructor to supply a grade. If these efforts are unsuccessful, the instructor's academic chair/director will appoint another qualified faculty member to assign the grade.

About the School of Social Work academic regulations and requirements

If you find that you have a problem while at the School of Social work you are advised to deal with concerns and problems before they become overwhelming. When you have a concern, you are advised to follow these steps:

When the concern is relevant to classroom Instruction:

- first talk with the instructor and attempt to resolve the issue. If a satisfactory resolution is not reached, then
- meet with the Director of the School, who will attempt to ascertain the basic facts of the matter, and
- In most instances, the Director of the School will arrange for a meeting involving both you and the instructor.

When the concern is relevant to field education and problems in the field placement:

Tips for success

- Plan ahead.
- Make the learning contract reflect your interests and needs.
- Review the learning contract/evaluation during weekly supervision.
- Request frequent and regular supervision from the field instructor.
- If you have familial or caregiver responsibilities, health concerns, unreliable transportation, or other circumstances that may present challenges to your internship, these should be discussed with your faculty liaison and field instructor early in the semester/session.
- Provide documentation regarding disabilities at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made.
- Discuss and agree to a schedule in writing at the beginning of the semester.
- Prepare an agenda for each supervisory conference and seek input from the field instructor.
- Read all communications from the field instructor and the faculty liaison carefully; ask questions if necessary.
- Be sure you understand directions, instructions, and requirements clearly including agency policies, guidelines, expectations, requirements, etc., and ask for assistance.

The student must take the initiative and responsibility for their own learning and utilize the

problem-solving model below to work on resolving problems in the field placement:

Procedures to follow when problems arise:

Step 1. Talk to the primary field instructor about concerns and problems concerning the placement. You may choose to obtain advice from your faculty liaison before talking to the field instructor. A corrective action plan to remediate the situation should be developed, written, signed, and dated by all parties.

Step 2. If problems persist, request a problem solving meeting with your faculty advisor, faculty liaison, and field instructor. (The faculty liaison can consult with the coordinator of field education about the problem if needed). Corrective Action Plans to remediate the situation should be developed, written, signed, and dated by all parties.

Step 3. If the field placement ends prematurely due to concerns about your performance, your academic advisor/faculty advisor, faculty liaison, coordinator of field education, and field instructor(s), if appropriate, will participate in a Professional Review Committee (PRC) meeting. Following the PRC recommendations will be made to the Director or his/her designee which could include dismissal from the program.

If the concern is not directly related to field education or class instruction:

1. First speak with your advisor. If a resolution is not reached, then
2. Speak with the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach. If the concern is not adequately addressed at this level, then
3. Make appointment to meet with the Associate Director of the School. If resolution is not reached during this meeting, then
4. Make an appointment to meet with the Director of the School.

Criminal History Check

Policy

The School of Social Work closely reviews applicants' criminal histories during the admissions process. The school's policy on criminal history is rooted in the strengths perspective and begins with a belief that an applicant will not commit further offenses. This is balanced by the school's recognition of social work education's role in gatekeeping. The school seeks to protect current and future clients from possible harm.

The School of Social Work requires all applicants to report any and all criminal history on the application to the program. Criminal history is defined as a history of substantiated charges of abuse and/or neglect of a child or adult, civil adjudication, and/or criminal conviction(s).

The Criminal History Review Team (CHRT), consisting of the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach, Field Education Coordinator, and the appropriate program coordinator (BSW, MSW, and or regional location coordinator), makes recommendations for admission for all applicants with a criminal history. Applicants with a criminal history must provide a Department of Human Services Central Registry Report and/or a criminal background check report upon request of the CHRT. Applicants must provide the criminal background check from the state in which the offense occurred. For offenses that occurred in Michigan, applicants are required to supply the Internet Criminal History Access Tool, Michigan State Police (ICHAT) report. Applicants who do not supply the requested reports cannot move forward in the application review process. The applicant is

responsible for paying any fees required for the criminal background check(s) or Department of Human Services Central Registry Report.

Applicants will be required to attend either (1) an informational meeting or (2) a complete criminal history interview. An informational interview informs the applicant of the potential impact a criminal record may have on securing a field placement, obtaining a social work license, malpractice insurance, and future employment as a social worker. A complete criminal history interview requires the applicant to answer questions relevant to the adjudication/conviction(s), such as his or her personal development since the offense(s) and her/his ability to provide social work services to vulnerable clients. An applicant who participates in a complete criminal history review and is offered admission must participate in an informational interview before accepting an offer of admission.

MSW applicants who graduated from Western Michigan University's BSW program are required to supply an updated criminal history report determined by the CHRT and/or Department of Human Services Central Registry Report. If the report shows no new offenses since admission into the BSW program applicants will be required to participate in informational interviews only. If a report shows new offenses since admission into the BSW program applicants must participate in complete criminal history interviews.

The School of Social Work reserves the right to deny any applicant whose civil adjudication and/or criminal conviction is of a nature that is contrary to the NASW Code of Ethics. In some circumstances, the School of Social Work may request additional information from a higher level background check before an admission decision is reached. Final acceptance is dependent upon the applicant signing a waiver, holding the School and University harmless for possible problems associated with obtaining a field placement, licensing, and/or employment.

If the School of Social Work discovers that an applicant did not provide truthful information about his/her criminal history at the time of application, and the applicant is enrolled in a program, the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will request and coordinate a professional review committee (PRC) meeting. The PRC committee will determine if the student may continue in the social work program, and if so, may define potential conditions for continuance.

Procedure

All applications will be reviewed based on the admissions criteria outlined in the admissions policies. If the applicant has a criminal history and meets all admissions criteria the application will be reviewed using the following procedures:

1. "Based on the type of crime committed, the admissions committee members should carefully assess the risks associated with a "Miss", or failing to detect and report a danger. It is important to note that this risk is not based on the applicant, but rather on the (nature of the) criminal offense which was committed. Committee members will also review how factors such as race, ethnicity, gender and socio-economic status can bias the criminal justice system. The cost of a "False Positive", or rejecting an applicant who will not re-offend, will also be determined, within a social justice framework. Acknowledging

the specific attributes of the applicant and what they can potentially contribute to the field will be taken into account” (Leedy & Smith, 2005, p. 10¹).

2. At the beginning of the academic year the Admissions Committee determines the threshold for making an error in an applicant’s risk of reoffending. Valid and reliable tools will be used to determine the threshold. Based on the information from step one the committee must decide how willing the school is to make each type of error. This level will be different for different offenses.
3. All applicants who meet admissions criteria and have a criminal history are required to supply the Office of Admissions with a criminal history report or Department of Human Services Central Registry Report. Without the appropriate report the application cannot continue in the review process.
4. Using the application information, including the ICHAT report, the CHRT will review the application information, including criminal history and post-conviction rehabilitation.
5. Based on the review developed in step 4 and information in steps 1 & 2, the CHRT will determine, to the best of its ability, the appropriateness of an applicant for admission.
6. The admissions committee will compare the determination (# 5) with the independently developed threshold year and make one of three decisions:
 - a. Deny admission,
 - b. Admit with an informational meeting, or
 - c. Conduct a complete interview in order to determine admission.
7. The admissions committee will conduct the appropriate interview using previously approved questions. In the event that an applicant participates in a complete interview the applicant may have two interviews. The first interview will review the criminal history and is intended to gather more information about the applicant’s history.
8. After the complete interview, the committee meets to discuss and determine the applicant’s suitability to the program, the profession, and his/her ability to safely work with vulnerable clients.
9. The Manager of Recruitment and Outreach notifies the applicant in writing of the final admission decision. If the applicant is offered admission she or he will be required to attend an informational interview (this is the second interview noted in #7 above).
 10. During the informational interview the student signs a waiver agreeing to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Western Michigan University and their boards, officers, employees and agents, and the WMU School of Social Work from any and all claims, liabilities, losses, damages and costs arising from problems associated with securing a field placement, license, and/or future employment as a social worker.
 11. If the School of Social Work discovers that an applicant did not provide truthful information about his or her criminal history at the time of application, and the applicant is enrolled in the School, the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will request and coordinate a professional review committee (PRC) meeting with the student. The PRC committee will determine if the student may continue in the social work program, and if so, may define potential conditions for continuance.

Students Convicted/Adjudicated During Enrollment Policy

The School of Social Work requires all students to report any criminal activity, defined as charges

¹ Leedy, G., & Smith, J. (2005). Felony Convictions and Program Admissions: Theoretical Perspectives to Guide Decision-Making. *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*. pg 5. Retrieved from the www August 28, 2017: <http://www.jswwarchives.com>

and rulings of civil adjudication and/or criminal conviction(s) while enrolled. The School of Social Work reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any student whose criminal offense(s) and conviction(s) or civil adjudication(s) is/are of a nature that is contrary to the NASW Code of Ethics, and/or when a conviction/adjudication prohibits the student from securing a field placement after three agency rejections.

Procedure

1. All students must immediately inform the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach and the Field Education Coordinator if he or she is arrested or convicted of any criminal offense and/or civil adjudication while enrolled in the social work program.
2. The student must provide the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach with an official Michigan State Police criminal background check and/or DHS Central Registry report (or a background check from the State Police agency in another state when an offense and conviction take place outside of Michigan).
3. The Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will then schedule a Professional Review Committee (PRC) meeting with the student, the Field Coordinator, and relevant faculty members.
4. The committee will follow the established PRC policies and procedures to discuss and recommend whether the student may continue in the program, and under what conditions.
5. If the field placement is discontinued due to this offense, and/or the student is rejected for a field placement by up to three field agencies, the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will schedule a PRC meeting to discuss and recommend whether the student may continue in the program, and under what conditions;
6. The School of Social Work Director will review the PRC recommendations and make the final decisions which will be sent to the student in writing;
7. If the student is dissatisfied with the PRC's decision, the student may submit a written appeal to the Director of the School of Social Work and request a meeting, and if dissatisfied with the Director's recommendations, the student may proceed to the appropriate university appeal procedures through the [Office of the Ombudsman](#).

Student Academic and Professional Evaluation Policy

The School of Social Work has a responsibility to evaluate and screen students for the social work profession. The Student Academic and Professional Evaluation Policy (SAPEP) describes the policies and procedures to be followed when a student is reported to have academic and/or professional deficiencies. The procedures that are detailed in this policy statement reflect the following principles:

1. Early consultation with a student reported to have academic and/or professional deficiencies.
2. Written notification to a student identifying deficiencies and performance goals.
3. Due process which allows sufficient time for a student to prepare materials relevant to the questions, prompt consideration of the matter, student access to data, and the possibility of student initiation of a formal hearing.

Policy

Performance in the school goes beyond classroom performance and attendance, to include ethical behavior, good conduct, competence, and psychological well-being sufficient to interact positively

and constructively with clients, field instructors, agency staff, faculty, and students (Cobb & Jordan, 1989). The School of Social Work considers the following breaches of performance:

1. Break in field placement due to student conduct.
2. Poor academic competence
 - *Graduate students* must have a grade point average of 3.0 in all classes
 - If a grade of CB or below is received in SWRK 6710 or 6720, or a grade of no credit is received in SWRK 6750, 6760/6780 OR 6770/6790, students must obtain approval from their advisor to repeat any of these courses.
 - All other courses in which students receive failing grades or a no credit may be repeated only once, and must be repeated in the WMU MSW program.
 - *Undergraduate students* must be in good academic standing with the University
 - Minimum grade point average of 2.0,
 - Minimum grade point average of 3.0 in their social work courses.
 - If a grade of no credit is received in SWRK 4100 or 4110, students must obtain approval from their advisor to repeat.

3. Professional incompetence

Professional incompetence signifies that a student is not adequately or appropriately performing at his or her program level. While not exhaustive, the following list contains examples of behaviors that constitute professional incompetence which may require a meeting with a student's advisor or faculty liaison, a professional review committee (PRC) meeting, and/or result in dismissal from the program:

- An inability to establish and maintain positive and constructive interpersonal relationships or communication patterns with clients, field instructors, faculty, and/or fellow students,
- Being unable to perform professional and/or academic duties due to personal problems,
- An inability to accept constructive feedback from the field instructor, faculty, and/or school administrators,
- Failing to show up at the field agency in a timely manner,
- Consistent lateness in meeting deadlines to complete work in class or field.

Students applying for their field placement who are rejected for placement by three or more agencies in one semester for reasons related to their appropriateness or readiness for a field placement may be dismissed from the program.

4. Ethical Conduct/Misconduct

Students in the School of Social Work must conduct themselves according to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Western Michigan University Student Code. The Social Work Code of Ethics is the primary basis for making decisions about whether students are exhibiting unethical behavior. Ethical behaviors as designated by the Social Work Code of Ethics are part of the requirements and standards of the program. All students will receive a copy of the NASW Code of Ethics upon entering the program. Discussion about the Code will occur in social work practice classes.

Students are responsible for being aware of and understanding the Western Michigan University Student Code of Conduct. Become familiar with it in its entirety by accessing it online:

<http://www.wmich.edu/conduct/expectations-students>.

² Cobb, N. H., & Jordan, C. (1989). Students with questionable values or threatening behavior: Precedent and policy from discipline to dismissal. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 25, 87-97.

While not exhaustive, the following list contains examples of behaviors that constitute a violation of the NASW Code of Ethics, or misconduct that will result in a meeting of the Professional Review Committee (PRC) and may result in dismissal from the program:

- Engaging in sexual activities with clients,
- Participating in dishonest, fraudulent, deceitful, or misrepresentation activities,
- Exploiting clients for personal advantage, and
- Being convicted of a felony offense while enrolled as a student in the program.

The School of Social Work policies do not supersede University policies, which hold for all WMU students. University policies regarding ethical behavior and misconduct can be found at: [Ethical Behavior or Misconduct Policy](#).

The Professional Review Committee (PRC)

Students who are not meeting academic and/or professional standards are informed of the problems in writing by the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach, the student's advisor, and/or the student's instructor. If concerns are not addressed by the student, and/or if the student violates the NASW Code of Ethics, the WMU student Code, or the School of Social Work academic and/or professional conduct policies, the student will be referred to the School's Professional Review Committee (PRC). The Professional Review Committee reviews the student's academic and professional performance during a PRC hearing and develops recommendations concerning the student's status in the School of Social Work.

The PRC Chairperson, the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach, the advisor, and one other relevant faculty member will constitute the minimum required membership of the PRC. Relevant is defined as faculty who have direct knowledge of the student and his or her competence in the areas that are the focus of the professional review. The coordinator of field education, faculty liaison, and field instructor will serve as members when the performance issue is related to the field placement. The chairperson and the advisor will determine the other members of the committee. The Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will serve as the policy administrator to assure that the relevant School and PRC policies and procedures are being followed, and that the student is being informed of the options that are available to him or her. The Manager of Recruitment and Outreach will serve as a nonvoting member. Students will receive written notification of the concerns, and the date, time and place of the hearing and composition of the committee.

Students have the option of bringing an observer and relevant supporting material (e.g., signed witness statements) to the hearing. An observer shall not participate in any capacity other than of a silent, nonparticipating observer during the meeting. Students who wish to consult with their observer during the proceedings may call a recess. The consultation will occur outside the meeting room.

The meeting format will consist of the presentation of faculty and/or field instructor concerns, followed by the student's response to the concerns. After all concerns have been discussed, the meeting will conclude and the student, and observer if present, will be excused. The meeting is expected to last approximately one hour.

The committee will then meet to discuss issues presented, and develop recommendations. These recommendations will be forwarded to the director, for his/her review. The director makes the final

PRC determination and sends the student a letter with his/her decisions. This letter serves as a behavioral contract for the student's continuance in the program, or as a formal notice of the student's dismissal from the program. Dismissal is exercised as a last resort.

Ideally this process gives the student sufficient notification and opportunity to improve his or her performance. The student's faculty advisor is responsible for advising and supporting the student through the professional review process.

University Dismissal Policies

WMU has expectations for all students regarding appropriate behavior. Dismissal is the last resort. Here are the links to the university dismissal policies:

[Student Dismissal Policies](#)

[Student Dismissal Appeal Process](#)

School of Social Work Program Dismissal Policy

The Professional Review Committee reviews a student's academic and professional performance and recommends to the director decisions concerning the student's continued progress in the program. The director makes the final PRC determination, and sends the student a letter with his/her decisions. This letter serves as a behavioral contract for the student's continuance in the program, or as a formal notice of the student's dismissal from the program. Dismissal is exercised as a last resort. The process ideally gives the student sufficient notification and opportunity to improve his or her performance. The student's faculty advisor is responsible for advising and supporting the student through the professional review process.

School of Social Work Dismissal Appeal Process

The School of Social Work student dismissal appeal process specifies that if the PRC recommends that a student leave the program, and the director concurs, but the student disagrees, the student may appeal to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services to reconsider the program termination. If the dean reverses the termination, the director of the School of Social Work, in conjunction with the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach, will develop a behavioral contract that the student must follow to remain in the program. If the student does not follow the behavioral contract, the director may then decide to terminate the student's enrollment. If the dean terminates the student's enrollment or does not reverse the previous termination decision, the student can proceed to use the appropriate university appeal procedures. Throughout this process, the Office of the Ombudsman is available to students and instructors for assistance on procedures and clarification of the rights of all parties.

Course Sequencing Requirements

The social work curriculum is carefully designed to move students systematically toward higher levels of knowledge and competence. Students must be aware that prerequisites are to be completed before registering for the next level of course-work. Students must also be aware that classes are scheduled such that they are offered during specific semesters/sessions and not during other semesters/sessions. Students must consult with their advisor and seek written permission before making any changes in their program plan of study. *Students who make course-scheduling changes without advisor permission risk graduation delays.*

Prerequisites

Social work courses are scheduled in a very particular order. The schedule of classes is designed to provide students with needed courses early in the program so that all prerequisites are met before taking higher level courses. If prerequisites are not met on time, students may need to delay their program until the prerequisites are met.

Taking a Leave of Absence

There are times when students are faced with unforeseen situations that necessitate a leave of absence. The School of Social Work values the students' commitment to family, medical, emotional and financial needs. Therefore, the School is flexible and willing to work with students on an individual basis to help students meet their needs.

The School of Social Work requires that when a leave is being considered, the student must:

- Meet with his/her advisor
- Provide the following documentation to the Office of Admissions and Student Services
 - [Graduate College Leave of Absence form \(graduate students only\)](#)
 - [School of Social Work Leave of Absence form](#)
 - Written statement the reason(s) for the leave with an estimated time of return to the program
 - Revised program plan of study signed by your advisor

Please be aware that prerequisites must be completed prior to continuing with the program plan (e.g., incomplete grades must be removed). Students returning within one year of their leave only need to alert the Office of Admissions and Student Services about their return. Students returning after one year must reapply to the program. Students must also be aware that graduate courses cannot be more than six years old to be used toward graduation.

Withdrawing from the School

If for any reason, after enrolling in the School, a student finds it necessary to leave the program (health, academic considerations, finances, etc.), it is important that the student's *advisor and the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach be informed immediately*. It is important to discuss the situation so that a student is fully aware of the possible consequences of withdrawal (e.g., no refund of tuition money, the need to re-apply if wanting to return, exceeding time limits if returning, or losing credit for a course). The school will make every attempt to assist you in your withdrawal.

Student Files/Records

Student files are maintained in the School of Social Work. Student files contain admission and academic materials (field evaluations, advisor notes, etc.). Students may request to review their academic file with the Manager of Recruitment and Outreach or with the Program Coordinator at EUP campuses at a convenient time. A student cannot remove a file or any of its contents, or make copies of a file in any form (e.g. electronic or paper). Student files are maintained in the School of Social Work for seven years after graduation, after which they are destroyed.

The University also keeps an academic file. If you wish an official transcript, you must go to the Registrar's Office in the Administration Building and request one in person or in writing. Students can request an unofficial, student copy of their transcript without a fee once each semester.

Change of Address/Phone Number

In order to assure efficient communication with you, we ask that you provide any change of address and telephone while attending school. Please provide a current address, telephone number and an E-mail address to the university through the GoWMU portal.

Student Mailboxes

All main campus students are provided a mailbox. Student mailboxes are located in front of the entrance to the School of Social Work on the fourth floor of the CHHS building. Important information, messages, assignments, events, etc., are communicated using the student mailboxes. *It is important to check the contents frequently.*

Faculty and instructors have mailboxes at their respective campuses where students can leave messages, assignments etc. Main campus faculty mailboxes are located in the break room just inside the school entrance.

Student E-mail

All students are assigned an e-mail address when enrolled at Western Michigan University. Students access their e-mail through the GoWMU portal by typing in their BroncoNet ID and password and clicking on the e-mail icon. Students must read their e-mail on a regular basis as important information from the School of Social Work and the University will be sent to their WMU e-mail addresses throughout the course of enrollment. ***The School of Social Work will only communicate through student WMU email, not personal email accounts.***

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited throughout the entire WMU campus.

Emergency Messages

The School will make every effort to deliver emergency messages (e.g., calls from a babysitter or school concerning an ill child, etc.). The phone number to use is (269) 387-3180. If there is no response, call (269) 387-3201, (269) 387-3171 or (269) 387-3172. Non-emergency messages will be left in your mailbox or e-mail address. If you are expecting an important message, please assist the office assistant in room 4045 by providing information on your location throughout the day.

Photocopying

Students are not permitted to operate the photocopying machine in the School of Social Work Faculty Lounge. Personal photocopying can be done in the Learning Resource Center, room 1466 CHHS.

Graduation Procedures and Auditing

When a student satisfactorily completes all academic requirements for a degree, fulfills all financial and legal obligations to the University, and meets all relevant processing deadlines, the student is eligible for graduation and to receive the appropriate degree. Eligible students may graduate at the end of any semester or session; however, a Commencement Ceremony is held only in December, April, and June. Information on graduation and how to apply for graduation can be found at <http://wmich.edu/registrar/graduation>

The Graduation Audit (Same as Application for Graduation)

The graduation audit is initiated by the submission of the Application for Graduation Audit. This is a process by which a student's academic record is examined to make sure all the requirements for the

degree have been met. A graduation auditor in the Registrar's Office conducts the audit and its outcome depends greatly on the completeness and appropriateness of the materials contained in the student's academic record. **Graduate students** should ensure that the following requirements are met and the following documents are contained in their academic record before applying for graduation. Instructions for applying to graduate can be found here:

<https://wmich.edu/registrar/graduation>

- A graduate student *Permanent Program Plan of Study* is completed, approved by the advisor and then filed in the Registrar's Office with the appropriate graduation auditor. The "Permanent Program Plan of Study" form can be found here:
<http://www.wmich.edu/socialwork/forms>
- The *Permanent Program Plan of Study* should be filed along with the application form.
- Application for graduation:

The School of Social Work Hooding and Pinning Ceremony

The School of Social Work Hooding and Pinning Ceremony should not be confused with the WMU Commencement ceremony. The hooding and pinning ceremony is organized by the School of Social Work. It involves only social work faculty, social work graduates, and their families and friends. This is a time to celebrate the social work profession and the accomplishments of our students. This ceremony is typically held the Thursday evening before the April graduation commencement for Kalamazoo campus students, and the Thursday evening before the June graduation commencement for Grand Rapids students. Benton Harbor ceremony typically occurs the same weekend as commencement. Please refer to the website or ask the regional program coordinator for dates and times. The ceremony is held once an academic year, and everyone who graduates within that academic year is eligible to participate. Costs for these ceremonies prohibits the school from holding additional ceremonies in other semesters.

This is an event that is fun for all and should not be missed. It serves as a great way for the School to honor its students and their families in all that they have done to help their students survive a busy life as a student. It also gives families the opportunity to meet with instructors and cohorts, and to put a face to all the stories they may have heard. Students and faculty are asked to wear their regalia (cap, gown, hood, and tassel) for the ceremony. Graduation [regalia](#) may be obtained at the WMU Bookstore in the Bernhard Center. All students will be presented individually. Undergraduate students will be "pinned" by faculty as an honor for graduating with a Bachelor of Social Work degree and graduate students will be "hooded" by faculty as an honor for graduating with a Master of Social Work degree.

Regalia History

The use of academic dress stems from costumes worn in universities in the 14th and 15th centuries, particularly at Cambridge and Oxford in England. Since colonial times, it has been worn in the United States and was standardized by an Intercollegiate Code in 1895. The major distinguishing characteristics of the gowns are the sleeves, styled in the following fashions: bachelor, long pointed; master, oblong; and doctor and specialist, bell shaped. The doctor's gown has a velvet collar, facing and three bars on the sleeves. The specialist's gown differs from a doctor's in that it has no sleeve bars. Masters, specialists and doctors wear hoods lined with the official colors of the university from which the degree is granted. They vary in size and shape to indicate the several degrees. The doctor's hood is the largest and most lavishly decorated. The color of the velvet that circles the opening of the hood shows the degree earned – light blue for doctor of education, dark blue for doctor of philosophy, and peacock blue for doctor of public administration. Caps are mortar boards with the

tassel worn over the left front quadrant. The tassel's color indicates the academic program area.

WMU Commencement - Official Graduation

Information about [WMU Official Graduation](#) can be found online.

Tickets

Students may reserve their guests' tickets online by logging into GoWMU and clicking on "Graduation Ceremony RSVP" under "Academic Services" or by calling the Registrar's Office at (269) 387-4300.

The University regrets limiting admittance to the ceremony, but seating in Miller Auditorium is limited to the size of the graduating class and the number of expected participants and guests. If all guests with tickets have been seated, and empty seats remain in Miller Auditorium, guests without tickets will be invited to occupy the unused seats. Guests without tickets may view the exercise on the large screen TV in room 3512 Knauss Hall - no tickets are necessary.

Questions about graduation seating should be directed to: Miller Auditorium - (269) 387-2300

Extra tickets may be available on a first come first served basis only beginning the day before graduation at 10:00 a.m. at Miller Auditorium box office. Eligible students will receive up to two additional tickets (if available). Pictured student identification will be required.

School of Social Work Student Organizations

The School of Social Work has many student organizations and encourages all students to become involved. More information can be found at: <http://www.wmich.edu/socialwork/organizations>

College of Health and Human Services [Professional Standards and Responsibilities](#)

Building Policies

Building Hours (Fall & Spring)

Monday through Thursday **Unlock Lock**

North and South Entrances 7:30 - 5:00

West Entrance 7:30 - 9:00

Arc (Departmental/School Offices) 7:30 - 5:00

Learning Resource Center 8:00 - 8:30

Student Computing Lab 8:30 - 8:30

Friday **Unlock Lock**

North and South Entrances 7:30 - 5:00

West Entrance 7:30 - 5:00

Arc (Departmental/School Offices) 7:30 - 5:00

Learning Resource Center 8:00 - 5:00

Student Computing Lab 8:30 - 5:00

Saturday and Sunday

Building closed. Faculty and staff may access with WMU I.D.

Smoking Areas

This is a smoke free campus. No smoking is permitted on campus.

Cleanliness Guidelines

It is the responsibility of all occupants of the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) building to generally the physical environment of the building, including:

- Deposit trash and recycling in the appropriate receptacles
- Notify the Building Manager of spills
- Replace chairs and tables which they have moved from their proper locations

Animals

In keeping with University policy, except for service animals such as guide dogs and trained companion dogs, animals are not permitted in the College of Health and Human Services building.

Posters, Fliers, and Information Boards

Signs/fliers may be posted in designated areas only. Tape and other methods of attaching fliers to the walls and glass damage wall surfaces and other areas. The CHHS advising office will assist in locating the numerous options that are available for posting and some activities can be included on the college website and information boards. Contact the Dean's office about website and information board postings.

The School of Social Work has a bulletin board outside the office that will be updated frequently to include information regarding current events, job postings, student services, and other relevant information.

Open Flames

No open flames are allowed in the College of Health and Human Services building. This includes candles, incense, potpourri, or any other device that uses an open flame. Exceptions may be lab areas. See the department member in charge of the lab for permission.

University Policies

In order to assure that all students have the most up to date information, the School of Social Work includes links to many important University sites here. Students are encouraged to contact departments directly when they have questions about any of the following links:

WMU Academic Regulations and Standards

<http://catalog.wmich.edu/content.php?catoid=19&navoid=645>

Western Michigan University Student Code

<http://wmich.edu/conduct/code/>

Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexism

<http://www.wmich.edu/equity/policies/policiessexual-harrassment>

President's Statement on Racial and Ethnic Harmony

<https://www.wmich.edu/equity/policies/policiesracial-ethnic-harmony>

Discrimination: Complaints and Grievance Policy and Procedure

<http://www.wmich.edu/hr/manual-grievances>

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act

<http://wmich.edu/registrar/policies/ferpa>

Resources Available to Students

[Academic Skills Center](#)

[The Writing Center](#)

[Disability Services for Students](#)

[Academic Success Programs](#)

[Sindecuse Health Center](#)

[University Counseling at Sindecuse Health Center](#)

[Waldo Library](#)

[Learning Resource Center](#)

[Book Store](#)

[Housing and Residence Life](#)

[Vacation Breaks](#)

[Student Recreation Building](#)

[Miller Auditorium](#)

[Dining Hall/Campus Café Locations](#)