

GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

Idaho State University
Master of Social Work
GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK



**Idaho State
University**

**Sociology, Social Work
and Criminology**

Revised, September 2026

Welcome to the Master of Social Work Program at Idaho State University! A career in social work is filled with meaning, action, diversity and satisfaction. As a Social Work Program Faculty, we are honored to be a part of your educational and career journey.

This handbook is designed to familiarize you with the discipline of Social Work, the ISU Master of Social Work Program, and student resources. A copy of the Student Handbook is available on our program homepage <http://www.isu.edu/sociology/socialwork/index.shtml> or in hard copy form in our offices at the Kegel Liberal Arts Building, #323.

We encourage student involvement and welcome your questions, comments, and concerns.

Best Wishes!

ISU Master of Social Work Program Faculty

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Non-Discriminatory Policy

The Master of Social Work Program at ISU does not discriminate on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. This policy is applicable to every aspect of the program.

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Social Work: A Professional Career

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.

(CSWE Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards, 2015)

Professional social workers assist individuals, groups, and communities in restoring or enhancing their capacity for social functioning, while creating societal conditions favorable to their goals. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behavior, of social, economic and cultural institutions, and of the interaction of all these factors. Social work is a profession devoted to helping people function the best they can in their environments. This not only means providing services or therapy directly to people, but also working for change to improve social conditions.

The phrase "in their environments" points to a distinguishing characteristic of social work—one that sets it apart from other helping professions. Social workers help clients deal with how they feel about a situation and with what they can do about it. As a social worker, you will help people overcome some of the most difficult challenges in life including discrimination, poverty, mental illness, abuse, addiction, physical illness, loss, disability and educational problems. Social workers help prevent crises as well as counsel individuals, groups, families, and communities to cope more effectively with the stresses of everyday life (NASW, <http://www.socialworkers.org/>, 2009).

Professional social workers can be found in almost every facet of community life including public and private agencies serving schools, hospitals, prisons, senior centers, residential living facilities, mental health clinics, military organizations, and corporations. The social work profession has its own body of knowledge, code of ethics, practice standards, credentials, state licensing, and a nationwide system of accredited education programs. These equip the professional social worker to combine the desire to help others with the knowledge, skills, values, and ethics necessary to provide that help.

To be a social worker one must have a degree in social work from a college or university program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The undergraduate degree is the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) and prepares graduates for generalist entry-level work. Graduate degrees include the Master of Social Work (MSW), which enables graduates to engage in more advanced clinical practice, and the Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) or PhD, which is useful for conducting research or teaching at the university level. Degree programs involve classroom study as well as practical work experience.

Most states, including Idaho, require practicing social workers to be licensed, certified, or registered, although standards vary. Contact the state regulatory board directly (<https://secure.ibol.idaho.gov/IBOL/BoardPage.aspx?Bureau=SWO>) or the American Association of State Social Work Boards (www.aswb.org) for a list of regulatory agencies or for a comparison of state regulations.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization for social workers in the world. To discover additional information about the profession of social work, we encourage you to browse the NASW website at: <http://www.socialworkers.org>.

Is Social Work the Right Career Choice for You?

If you are looking for a career with meaning, action, diversity, satisfaction, and flexibility, then consider social work. Social workers are people who care about people, who want to make things better, who want to

relieve suffering, and who want their work to make a difference (NASW, <http://www.socialworkers.org/>, 2009).

Characteristics of effective social workers include:

- A general belief in people's potential for positive change and a sense of commitment to the well-being of other people
- A commitment to helping individuals, groups, and community systems function effectively and to helping meet their needs to the greatest extent possible
- Strong analytic and communication skills, both verbal and written
- A non-judgmental and non-punitive attitude toward people with problems
- An interest in people and the ability to form effective working relationships with different kinds of people from many different backgrounds
- A willingness to abide by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics
- An understanding of the need to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to work effectively in a helping relationship with others and to fight realistically and effectively against social problems
- Sufficient objectivity, emotional stability and a healthy self-concept to be able to focus on the needs of clients with whom you work rather than trying to use your clients to meet your own needs

For more information about social work as a career, we encourage you to visit NASW's website: <http://www.socialworkers.org/Careers.aspx>.

The Idaho State University Master of Social Work Program

Mission Statement

The mission of the Master of Social Work Program at Idaho State University is to prepare students for advanced clinical social work practice that promotes human and social well-being, advances social justice and human rights, and engages in anti-poverty practice. Graduates are expected to become culturally competent and effective practitioners with professional values and integrity, evidence-based knowledge, and skills relevant to their local and global communities.

Derived from the program mission, the goals of the Master of Social Work Program are to prepare students:

1. To develop an identity that will incorporate the values, principles, and ethics of the social work profession.
2. To develop practice skills that center a person-in-environment model and the importance of human relationships, with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, applying evidence-based knowledge.
3. To develop critical thinking skills based on scientific inquiry and research-informed practice.
4. To work with diverse, vulnerable, oppressed, and disadvantaged populations locally and globally.
5. To advance global human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice through macro focused policy-practice, micro level service oriented work, and through culturally competent clinical practice.
6. To gain expertise in clinically focused practice with an emphasis on children and families and forensic social work.

The Master of Social Work Program

The Master of Social Work Program is located within the Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminology in the College of Arts and Letters. We offer both Advanced Standing and Standard Admission MSW programs. This program was accredited in 2018, and in 2023 expanded our accreditation to include an online program option.

The mission of promoting human and social well-being and advancing social justice through advanced clinical practice emphasizes its importance of the generalist practice skills at different levels of systems but also focuses on clinical social work practice that will be translating into making changes in a macro environment. The generalist practice content incorporates the client's relationship to the environment and requires that students gain skills in assessment, problem solving and resource development in order to work with people of all ages and backgrounds at different levels of practice. Based on the generalist practice curriculum, the specialized practice content focuses on developing general advanced clinical practice skills with an emphasis on children and families or forensic social work. The program's objective is to equip students with the knowledge, professional values, skills, and scientific and practice methods that are required for generalist social work practice as well as advanced knowledge and clinical practice skills for advanced professional social work practice.

Central to the program is a commitment to human and social well-being and social justice. The program strives to support students in their development as practitioners who identify themselves with the social work profession and are able to apply ethical principles and critical thinking in practice. Students will be prepared for the delivery of social work services that improve and enhance well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and local and global communities by applying evidence-based knowledge. This includes the elimination of social injustices, which deny human dignity and opportunity. Students will be encouraged to incorporate social diversity in their practice. They will also be encouraged to advocate for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice by recognizing, supporting, and building on the strengths and resiliency of human beings locally and beyond. Students will be expected to develop critical thinking skills by applying scientific inquiry and research-informed practice. Students will gain expertise in the content area of children and families or forensic social work by strengthening their clinical practice skills. In carrying out these practices, the MSW Program is committed to fostering respect for cultural diversity in students' values and life experiences and to helping diverse students integrate those values and experiences into their professional education and practices.

Idaho State University Master of Social Work Program Goals

Derived from the Program mission, the goals of the Master of Social Work Program are to prepare students:

1. To develop an identity which will incorporate the values, principles, and ethics of the social work profession
2. To develop practice skills with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities applying evidence-based knowledge
3. To develop critical thinking skills based on scientific inquiry and research-informed practice
4. To work with diverse, vulnerable, oppressed and disadvantaged populations locally and globally
5. To advance global human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice
6. To gain expertise in clinically focused practice with an emphasis on children and families and forensic social work

Upon completion of the program, students are expected to have achieved nine core competencies as outlined in the CSWE 2022 EPAS:

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

For detailed information on each of these competencies, please refer to:

[2022 EPAS | CSWE](#)

Professional Licensure Guidelines and Notification:

As a graduate of the Master of Social Work Program, students are eligible to apply for licensure as a social worker in the State of Idaho. Licensing regulations vary by state, and students are also eligible to apply for licensure in any additional state that maintains licensing protocols for MSW level practitioners. Licensing information for Idaho can be found here: [Welcome to Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses - Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses](#). If you plan to reside and work outside of the state of Idaho, students are encouraged to do their due diligence in researching the licensing requirements of that state. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the licensing requirements relevant to their plans for practice.

Many excellent career opportunities for social workers are available in the areas of family and children's services, adult and juvenile corrections, health care, community mental health, and services for senior citizens.

Master of Social Work Program Context

The Department of Sociology, Social Work, and Criminology currently offers the degree options of a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, a Master of Social Work, a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a Criminology emphasis, an Associate Arts in Criminology, and a minor in Gender and Sexuality.

Social work job openings are growing at local, state, and national levels and are expected to significantly exceed other job openings. Particularly in Idaho, social work-related jobs are likely to be one of the top areas of growth not only in the next few years but throughout the next decade according to the Idaho Short-Term Occupational and Industry Project Report (2014). Given the current and future employment

opportunities for Social Workers, ISU is responding to the needs of the state of Idaho and the needs of ISU students by developing this quality, primarily seated MSW program.

The Master of Social Work Program Overview

Program options. The ISU MSW program is a clinically focused advanced social work master's program. The program offers the MSW degree with an emphasis on children and families and forensic social work practice. ISU offers both Advanced Standing and Standard Admissions programs, outlined below.

Advanced standing. Students admitted with advanced standing will have previously completed a BSW in a CSWE accredited Social Work program which includes a practicum placement internship of not less than 400 hours under the supervision of a professional with a BSW/MSW from a CSWE accredited Social Work Program.

Standard Admission. Standard Admissions students complete one full-time year of generalist practice content that incorporates the knowledge, values, and skills required to work as a generalist practitioner with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students will complete 400 hours of practicum education and 29 hours of credits including 8 credits of practicum and seminars over two semesters.

Specialized practice. The specialized practice content builds on the generalist perspective by offering courses and practicums for advanced clinical practice skills and knowledge. Students will complete 500 hours of advanced practicum education and 34 hours of credits. Among those credits, 10 credits are assigned on practicums and seminars and 9 credits are assigned to take specialty required elective courses for developing track specific skills in clinical practice that focuses either on forensic practice or practice with children and families.

The Master of Social Work Curriculum Plans

*Please note, the program is in the process of adopting curriculum changes that will take place in the 2027/2028 Academic Year. The plans presented here are informational only, and students will need to work with their academic advisor to plan any upcoming curriculum changes when they create in an approved program of study.

Year 1: Standard Admission Students (Generalist Practice Courses)					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
SOWK #:	Course Title:	Cr:	SOWK #:	Course Title:	Cr:
5501	Foundations of Social Work	3	5515	Research in Social Work	3
5510	Adv. Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3	5550	Direct Practice with Groups	3

5520	Direct Practice with Individuals and Families	3	5594	Practice Interventions with Organizations and Communities	3
5571	Social Justice Advocacy and Policy Practice	3	5578	Practicum II	3
5576	Practicum I	3	5579	Practicum Seminar II	1
5577	Practicum Seminar I	1			
Total Credits:		16	Total Credits:		13

Year 1: Summer Semester

Standard Admission students will take this after completing their foundation year courses.

Advanced Standing Students may take this summer session at the beginning or end of their regular semester program.

SOWK #:	Course Title:	Cr:
6635	Diversity in Social Work Practice	3
Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3
Total Credits:		6

Year 2: Standard Admission Students (Advanced Practice Coursework)					
Year 1: Advanced Standing Students (Advanced Practice Coursework)					
Fall Semester			Spring Semester		
SOWK #:	Course Title:	Cr:	SOWK #:	Course Title:	Cr:
6625	Mental Health Evaluation and Strengths Based Assessments	3	6620	Advanced Practice Interventions and Comparative Theories	3
6671	Advanced Policy Practice and Advocacy (AO)	3	6615	Applied Research for Social Work	3
Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3	Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3
6676	Practicum III	4	6678	Practicum IV	4
6677	Practicum Seminar III	1	6679	Practicum Seminar IV	1
Total Credits:		14	Total Credits:		14

The following is a sample program of study for part-time students. The program outlines both standard admission and advanced standing guidelines.

Sample Program of Study:

Fall Semester Year 1: Standard Admission Students			Fall Semester Year 2: Standard Admission Students		
Sowk #:	CourseTitle :	Cr.	Sowk #:	Course Title:	Cr.
5501	Foundations of Social Work	3	5515	Research in Social Work	
5510	Advanced Human Behavior and the Social Environment	3	5550	Direct Practice with Groups	
5520	Direct Practice with Individuals and Families	3			
	Total Credits:	9		Total Credits:	6
Fall Semester Year 2: Standard Admission Students			Spring Semester Year 2: Standard Admission Students		
5571	Social Justice, Advocacy, and Policy Practice	3	5594	Practice Interventions with Organizations and Communities	3
5576	Practicum I	3	5578	Practicum II	3
5577	Practicum Seminar I	1	5579	Practicum Seminar II	1
	Total Credits	7		Total Credits:	7
Summer Semester: Standard Admission Students and Advanced Standing Students					
6635	Diversity in Social Work Practice	3			
	Total Credits:	3			
Fall Semester Year 3: Standard Admission Students			Spring Semester Year 3: Standard Admission Students		
Fall Semester Year 1: Advanced Standing Students			Fall Semester Year 1: Advanced Standing Students		
6625	Mental Health Evaluation and Strengths Based Assessment	3	6620	Advanced Practice Interventions and Comparative Theories	3
6671	Advanced Policy Practice and Advocacy	3	6615	Applied Research for Social Work	3
	Total Credits:	6		Total Credits:	6
Summer Semester: Standard Admission Students and Advanced Standing Students					
Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3			
	Total Credits:	3			

Fall Semester Year 4: Standard Admission Students			Spring Semester Year 4: Standard Admission Students		
Fall Semester Year 2: Advanced Standing Students			Fall Semester Year 2: Advanced Standing Students		
Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3	Elective	Students will choose an elective based on their specific area of interest.	3
6676	Practicum III	4	6678	Practicum IV	4
6677	Practicum Seminar III	1	6679	Practicum Seminar IV	1
		Total Credits: 8			Total Credits: 8

Generalist Practice:

Foundations of Social Work (SOWK 5501) will cover foundational concepts of the social work profession, including introduction of frameworks and models to understand human behavior and the social environment. Students are introduced to ethics, values, and standards of the profession, along with foundational conceptual frameworks and issues in human behavior and development. Special attention is devoted to the concept of person in the environment, biopsychosocial perspective, human development over the lifespan, and social diversity. Generalist practice with a systems approach will be emphasized, and examples will be included that focus on racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual diversity and various vulnerable populations.

Human Behavior Theory and Cultural Diversity (SOWK 5510) Course will cover advanced theoretical concepts to prepare students to apply conceptual frameworks and issues for understanding human behavior as a function of bio-psycho-social-spiritual processes and interactions in the environment. Advanced information related to human diversity and at-risk populations, including issues pertaining to racial and ethnic groups, and gender and sexual orientations will be covered.

Research in Social Work (SOWK 5515) Introduces the principles and procedures of scientific research and includes a variety of strategies and tools for studying social phenomena. Course also includes a survey of statistical techniques focusing on descriptive statistics, hypothesis testing and correlations. Students work in computer labs and use software for statistical analysis commonly used in the social sciences to produce descriptive and summary statistics for large data sets.

Direct Practice with Individuals and Families (SOWK 5520) will examine micro level systems within the generalist practice framework. Theoretical frameworks for use with individuals and families as well as interviewing and problem-resolution methods will be covered. Students will learn the NASW Code of Ethics and how these ethics and values of social work affect micro level practice. Students will utilize a generalist skill base in learning to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals and families.

Direct Practice with Groups (SOWK 5550) will examine mezzo level systems within the generalist practice framework. Group theory, process, dynamics and their applications to practice will be covered. Students will utilize a generalist skill base in learning to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with small group systems. Knowledge, values, skill, cognitive and affective processes and behaviors development within the framework of generalist practice is presented in this course while focusing on specific intervention strategies within the content area of group work at the master's level.

Social Justice, Advocacy, and Policy Practice (SOWK 5571) Examine social policies created as society's strategy for addressing social concerns such as unemployment, poverty, and mental illness. Students will

critically evaluate programs and policies in order to develop skills to advance social and economic justice and to deliver effective social work services. Specific, evaluated graduate-level activities and/or performances are identified in the course syllabus.

Practicum & Seminar I (SOWK 5576, SOWK 5577) will facilitate student application of classroom learning in a social service agency. Students will demonstrate their practicum competency in all nine competencies. In this internship students will gain a generalist perspective of social work practice and prepare to move into an advanced area of clinical practice. This course prepares students to apply practice theories, models, and ethical principles in a specific social service delivery system. Students will complete their internship at a minimum of 200 hours within a social service agency under direction of a licensed master's level social worker. The Practicum Seminar offers students the opportunity to address questions and challenges experienced in the social work agency practicum placement and integrate practice, policy and research.

Practicum & Seminar II (SOWK 5578, SOWK 5579) will be continuation of Practicum and Seminar I (SOWK 5576, SOWK 5577) courses and facilitate student application of classroom learning in a social service agency. Students will demonstrate their practicum competency in all nine competencies. In this internship students will gain a generalist perspective of social work practice and prepare to move into an advanced area of clinical practice. This course prepares students to apply practice theories, models, and ethical principles in a specific social service delivery system. Students will complete their internship at a minimum of 200 hours within a social service agency under direction of a licensed master's level social worker. The Practicum Seminar offers students the opportunity to address questions and challenges experienced in the social work agency practicum placement and integrate practice, policy and research.

Practice Interventions with Organizations and Communities (SOWK 5594) Advanced focus on community and organizational structure and function. Uses the generalist model of social work with macro level systems including building knowledge and skills focusing on social action and social change. Specific attention is given to helping students develop necessary skills to engage, assess, intervene and evaluate with organizations and communities (macro level) effectively. Specific, evaluated graduate-level activities and/or performances are identified in the course syllabus.

Applied Research in Social Work (SOWK 6515) Students develop a program evaluation proposal to demonstrate competency in utilizing practice-informed research and research-informed practice in the context of direct clinical practice. Students learn to apply a variety of program evaluation methods and approaches, including quantitative and qualitative methods, needs assessment, formative and process evaluation, and summative/outcome evaluation.

Advanced Clinical Practice:

Advanced Practice Interventions and Comparative Theories (SOWK 6620) builds on Direct Practice with Individuals and Families (SOWK 5520) and Direct Practice with Groups (SOWK 5530) by integrating advanced practice interventions and theories of social work treatments. Students will learn how to apply current best practices with client populations of interests by utilizing evidence-based practice models and critical thinking. Students will also extend their clinical practice skills with individuals, families, and groups.

Advanced Practice Interventions and Comparative Theories (SOWK 6620) Course will cover advanced interventions and comparative theories in social work with emphasis on utilizing evidence-based practices in counseling with individuals, families, and groups at the clinical level.

Evaluation of Mental Disorders and Strengths-Based Assessment (SOWK 6625) The course builds on the generalist practice courses and enhances clinical knowledge and skills regarding best practices in engagement and assessment with clients. Students learn to apply diagnostic procedures from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, as well as a strengths-based approach to assessment. This course prepares students for advanced clinical practice in mental health.

Diversity in Social Work Practice (SOWK 6635) This course is designed to familiarize students with the ways in which diversity impacts social work practice. Course content will focus on increasing students' knowledge of the lived experiences of diverse populations, awareness of theoretical frameworks regarding privilege, oppression, and enhancing students capacity for cultural humility and culturally competent practice.

Advanced Policy, Legislations, and Administration (SOWK 6671) Prepares students to be competent client advocates and policy change agents. Students gain knowledge and skills in the areas of advancing human rights, and social, economic, and environmental justice, as well as advocacy for policy that promotes evidence-based clinical practice.

Practicum & Seminar III (SOWK 6676, SOWK 6677) will facilitate student application of classroom learning in a social service agency. Students apply their knowledge and skills in this advanced practicum. Students integrate and apply the material learned in the classroom and in generalist practice internship or BSW internship. Students are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate all nine practice competencies and behaviors in the advanced practicum. Students will complete their internship at a minimum of 250 hours within a social service agency under direct supervision of a licensed master's level social worker. The Practicum Seminar offers students the opportunity to address questions and challenges experienced in the social work agency placement, and integrate practice, policy and research. Students will develop their capacity as leaders in the practicum and contribute to the welfare of the agency through integration of advanced practice methods.

Practicum & Seminar IV (SOWK 6678, SOWK 6679) will be a continuation of the Practicum and Seminar III (SOWK 6676, SOWK 6677) courses. Students continue to expand on developing, broadening, and sharpening their knowledge and skills in the practicum. In the final semester of the MSW practicum experience represents the integration and application of the material learned in the classroom and from the generalist practice internship. Students are afforded the opportunity to demonstrate all nine competencies and practice behaviors in the advanced practicum. Students will complete their internship at a minimum of 250 hours within a social service agency under direct supervision of a licensed master's level social worker. The Practicum Seminar offers students the opportunity to address issues in social work placement, and integrate practice, policy and research. Students will develop their capacity as leaders in the practicum and contribute to the welfare of the agency through integration of advanced practice methods.

Individualized Study in an Area of Interest

In addition to required core courses, students are able to enhance their clinical practice expertise in an area of children and families or forensic social work by taking three elective courses. Electives can include (but are not limited to) courses such as Marriage and Family Therapy, Special Topics in Family Violence, Trauma-Informed Practice, Fundamentals of Forensic Behavioral Science, or Sex Crimes.

School Social Work Endorsement

Idaho State University is proud to offer an endorsement for individuals seeking the Pupil Service Staff Certificate for School Social Work in Idaho. Individuals seeking this endorsement must complete all required MSW coursework, complete SOWK 6691: School Social Work with a grade of B- or better, and complete an advanced practicum placement in a preK-12 school setting. Individuals can submit a request for an institutional recommendation from ISU through our website.

Non-ISU graduates seeking an institutional recommendation form from the ISU MSW program must provide the following information to the program director for review: Academic transcripts verifying the completion of an MSW from a CSWE accredited institution, including a class on School Social Work; proof of either (a) completion of an advanced practicum in a preK-12 school setting or (b) proof of post-LMSW work experience with children and families in a school-based or other setting. Adequate post-LMSW work experience is defined as equivalent to the time spent in an advanced practicum.

Admission to the Master of Social Work Program (Standard Admission)

The ISU Master of Social Work Program requires an earned baccalaureate degree from a college or university regionally accredited in the U.S. or its equivalent from a school in another country with a minimum of 21 credits in social or behavioral sciences. Applicants also must have earned a grade of C or better in human biology or general psychology as well as one introductory social or behavioral science course. The ISU Master of Social Work Program welcomes applicants from all academic backgrounds who meet these liberal arts requirements.

Other Criteria

Applicants must have achieved a minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA 3.0 (based on a 4.0 grading scale) with strong potential of successful academic performance at the graduate level. Applicants with an undergraduate GPA of 2.75 may address their low GPA in their personal statement. Applicants who can articulate significant personal growth since completing their Bachelor's degree may still be considered for admission to the MSW program.

Applicants must demonstrate experience in providing service to people at a minimum of 30 hours of paid or volunteer work experience in the human services. They must demonstrate strong interest, motivation, and commitment to the social work profession and values. Personal qualifications such as professionalism, sensitivity to cultural differences, capacity for self-awareness, concern for the needs of others, and strong written and communication skills are also highly considered.

Applicants' academic, professional, and personal qualities are evaluated through their personal statement, academic transcripts, test scores, work history, and letters of reference. One reference letter must be provided from a faculty member who has taught the applicant in a social science course, if the applicant has completed their undergraduate degree within the past four years. Students who have been out of higher education for more than 4 years may opt to have a professional reference instead. A second letter must be provided from either the applicant's undergraduate practicum instructor, if the applicant has completed their undergraduate degree within the past four years. Applicants who have been out of higher education for more than four years may obtain a second letter of recommendation from a supervisor for paid or volunteer social services work. Applicants from the BASW program at ISU may submit a ranking rubric approved by the BASW Program Director and completed by a member of the Social Work faculty at ISU in lieu of one or two letters of recommendation.

Students who are currently, or have previously within the past five years, been enrolled in another graduate program from which they did not graduate must submit a letter from the Director of said program. This letter should detail whether or not the student was in good standing with the program at the time of departure, if the student met the minimum GPA requirements of the graduate program, and any information pertaining to a formal dismissal from the program if pertinent. Students who are transferring from another MSW program must also provide a letter from the Practicum Director that indicates whether or not the student was dismissed from their practicum placement, or if the student was in good standing with their practicum placement. The ISU MSW program will not transfer any credits related to Practicum or Seminar courses. These letters must be received by the admissions deadline for the semester in which a student is applying.

Students with BSW/BASW Degree:

Applicants who earned a BASW/BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited program, or from an international social work program that is comparable to and/or recognized as equivalent by the CSWE. In addition to all requirements above, they must have achieved a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or better for all Social Work courses in their undergraduate program. BSW students entering our advanced standing program do not take the first year of generalist practice coursework, but rather begin with specialized practice coursework

Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Applications

Applications are completed and submitted online along with official transcripts, a personal statement, two reference letters, and a resume. Once all items are complete, transcripts are assessed through the ISU graduate school to ensure a proper bachelor's degree was earned and to calculate a cumulative GPA for the last 60 ± semester or 90 ± quarter credits. Applications are then sent to three social work faculty in the admission committee for review. Applications are ranked based on academic record, letters of recommendation, a personal statement, a resume, and students with experience with volunteering or working in a human service capacity. All applications are ranked using an assessment rubric, and students receive a final score based on the average of all reviewers. Once all students have been ranked by reviewers, the admissions committee will meet as a group to discuss ratings and make decisions about student admissions. After the committee makes admissions recommendations, the decisions are reviewed by the Dean, and the Associate of the Graduate School at ISU.

Policies and Procedures for Notifying Students of Admission

Applicants are notified of admission decisions via an electronic decision letter. The admissions decision letter is attached to a copy of the Approval for Admission Form that provides three response options. Applicants can confirm enrollment, defer admission, or decline admission. Students may defer their enrollment only once and reapplication is permitted only within 1 year of the original acceptance without further application activity and the processing fee. Graduate students who have enrolled for the term in which they have been admitted may take one year leave of absence (2 semesters excluding summers) off before they would need to re-enroll or reapply to the Graduate School.

Contingent Conditions

For students with academic conditions, the graduate school's admission decision letter includes the performance requirements. Students will also be notified of any requirements for their enrollment from the MSW program's welcome letter. Students are not able to register for courses without fully submitting official transcripts and test scores to the graduate school. The other academic conditions (i.e., prerequisite courses for standard admission) must be met by the end of the first semester of enrollment. Students who have not completed BA/BS degree at the time of application date must submit final official transcripts showing their degree conferred to the graduate school before the first semester of the MSW program. A waiver can be provided for students enrolling in the Advanced Standing program, beginning classes in the summer semester, if they have graduated the spring semester immediately preceding enrollment. They are eligible to register for summer courses without final transcript on final, but will not be allowed to enroll in fall semester courses until transcripts have been received and verified.

Transfer of Credits Policy

Applicants requesting transfer of credits must meet specific criteria and provide additional documents. They must have completed the previous coursework at a regionally accredited institution. The coursework must be equivalent to the ISU MSW coursework, grades earned must be a 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale, and coursework must have been completed within 8 years of admission to the MSW program. A total of 9 semester graduate level credits may be transferred from regionally accredited institutions. Applicants must submit One Transfer Credit Approval Form for each course within 1st year of program enrollment, prior to submission of program of study. Applicants also submit a course syllabus for each course and completed assignments for each course for which transfer of credit is requested. Coursework is evaluated on a course-by-course basis by a faculty member who has been teaching an equivalent course at the ISU's MSW program. Once approved, only the credit hours transfer, not the grades. Students must have official transcripts with final grades posted on file in the Graduate School in order for transfer credit requests to be processed. The Graduate School will notify students and department chair via email when the request has been processed. Transfer credits cannot be awarded for Practicum or Seminar courses.

The Master of Social Work Program does not grant credit for previous life experience. Students with prior volunteer or social service work experience are encouraged to seek practicum placements that may offer different learning activities and opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Reasonable Accommodations for Students

Students who are experiencing barriers in the educational setting due to a qualified permanent or temporary disability may be eligible for services through the Idaho State University's ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and Disabilities Resource Center. Accommodations for all reasonable requests will be made for documented disabling conditions. Students should discuss their needs with instructors at the beginning of the semester. Students with disabling conditions must qualify for the program by the same criteria as all other students and meet the academic standards for participation in the program.

Advising

All students are invited to an orientation meeting upon acceptance into the program. Prior to orientation, students will receive a new student welcome packet. Students are responsible for reading all contents of this packet to ensure they are adequately prepared to begin their MSW program. After orientation, students are required to meet with a program-appointed advisor to complete an approved program of study. Students who do not have an approved and signed program of study on file with the department prior to the first date of the academic semester the student is scheduled to begin their program may be dismissed from the MSW program.

Students are required to meet with their academic advisor over the course of their degree program, as outlined below. In addition to these required meetings, students may email their advisor at any time if they are in need of support. Please note that most faculty are not available to meet with students in the summer session. All students must meet with their academic advisor and/or get written approval from their academic advisor prior to making any changes to their approved program of study.

Full-time Advanced Standing students will meet with an advisor prior to their program start date, and again the following fall semester to complete the pre-graduation advising checklist and review licensing exam timelines.

Full-time Standard Admission students will meet with an advisor prior to their program start date, and again the following spring semester to prepare for their advanced standing year. Students will meet with their academic advisor during their final fall semester to complete the pre-graduation advising checklist and review licensing exam timelines.

Students who are attending the program on a part-time basis, regardless of program type, are required to meet with their advisor a minimum of once per semester.

If a student signs up for an advising appointment, it is their responsibility to put the appointment on their calendar and to attend the appointment. Students should give their advisor the courtesy of 24 hours notice for cancellation for appointment times that have been scheduled. In the event of an emergency, students should notify their faculty as soon as possible that they will be unable to attend, or the reason they did not attend. Students who sign up for an advising appointment and do not attend without providing adequate notification or communication will automatically be placed on a performance improvement plan. Students who sign up for and do not attend more than one advising appointment (without adequate notification), will be dismissed from the program. Students who do not sign up for advising appointments when instructed to do so may be placed on a performance improvement plan. Students who ignore more than one request from their advisor instructing them to sign up for academic advising appointments may be dismissed from the program. Students who choose to ignore advising instructions given by their advisor, or who choose to deviate from their approved program of study, may be dismissed from the program.

Advisors can assist students in choosing coursework which will further their professional development and career interests. The University's Degree Works program is accessible to every student and assists them in planning as well. Faculty maintain posted scheduled office hours and can also be reached via email or telephone to schedule an advising appointment. Social Work faculty makes themselves available for Advising Center questions. Students interested in the Master of Social Work may tour the Department and meet with faculty.

Fees

Beginning fall 2009, a professional fee per semester per student was approved by the Idaho State Board of Education. The cost of maintaining accreditation for the Master of Social Work Program significantly exceeds the cost of nonprofessional programs, which do not require accreditation at the university. In order to be licensed and to be accepted in graduate programs, social work students must graduate from an approved university with an accredited program. The professional fee covers the cost of program accreditation and reaffirmation requirements, thereby ensuring that the ISU Master of Social Work Program can continue to offer a quality, accredited curriculum to our students. Malpractice insurance coverage for students engaged in practicum experience is also required to be paid by the student. These fees will be collected each semester. Please check with the Social Work Program office for a current list of fee amounts.

Moodle and ISU Email Accounts

Social work students are required to maintain an ISU email account in order to facilitate communication regarding class and program information. All department communications will occur through ISU email accounts, with the exception of admissions information and new student welcome packets which may be sent to the email address an individual uses to apply to our program, prior to establishing an ISU email account. It is a student's responsibility to check their ISU email account regularly for the duration of their program of study. Students who choose not to check their email regularly are still held accountable for information and/or deadlines relayed via email. In addition, students need to be knowledgeable about the online learning system where social work course syllabi and other class materials may be accessed. This system is designated by the University and is subject to change over time.

Online Program Internet and Audio/Video Requirements and Expectations for Attendance in Online Classes.

Students who apply to and are accepted into the Online Program option, or who enroll in a Synchronous Online class, are required to have reliable access to high-speed internet service, and access to a computer with audio and visual capacities. Online students are expected to attend class via Zoom, and may be required to keep their cameras on for the duration of class time. In-class participation is expected, so students will also need access to audio and will need to have enough internet bandwidth to keep camera and audio on during class without the internet being slowed down or creating a time delay. Students in online classes should be stationary for the duration of online classes, and should not participate in an online class while driving their vehicles, running errands, or completing chores at their place of residence. Students need to create some level of privacy while attending class, and people who reside with you in your home should neither be visible on camera or have the capacity to hear or see what is happening in the classroom. We do not invite non-enrolled individuals to participate in our online classes. Students need to create a distraction-free environment for attending online classes, and if this is not possible they may be removed from the program.

Any student attending a class via Zoom must be logged into their university sponsored zoom account. Students must also utilize their first and last name on their screen for attendance purposes. Students who do not attend class while logged into their zoom account and who are not using their full names will be considered absent, as they will show up as "guest" in the official zoom participation log.

Student Attendance Policy:

Attending class is imperative for the development of professionalism as well as social work skills and knowledge essential for practice. As a professional degree training program, we expect students to manage their attendance needs in a way that reflects the highest level of professional ethics. Attendance will be taken during class.

During a full-semester course of 16 weeks, students are allowed two absences from class without penalty, and should plan accordingly. Students who miss three classes will be deducted one full letter grade. Students who miss four or more classes will receive an automatic failing grade for the course. During the summer session or in 8-week long courses, students may miss one class without penalty, and should plan accordingly. Students who miss two classes will receive an automatic failing grade for the course.

Missing two to four classes, depending upon semester length, is 25% of the class, and at that threshold we do not believe students have interacted with enough course material to demonstrate mastery of the core social work competencies covered in a class. Students who have an extenuating circumstance that necessitates more absences, will need to provide documentation from a medical provider and/or other documentation that supports the need to miss additional classes. Students will need to work directly with the program director to explore extended absences; in some cases students may need to take a medical withdrawal or a formal leave of absence from the program.

Student Participation:

Student Social Work & Sociology Association (SSWSA)

SSWSA, the official student organization of the Idaho State University Social Work Programs, is committed to the active participation, learning and representation of social work students as they develop into entry level professionals. The mission of SSWSA is to advance a spirit of fellowship among social work and sociology majors, to recognize and encourage leadership, to provide the opportunity for meaningful exchange of ideas, and to interface with the social work profession. Any student who is a pre-major or declared social work or sociology major is eligible to become a member of SSWSA. All social work majors are urged to join and become active in the organization. Membership drives are held each year. Meeting times are established at the beginning of the school year based upon the best accommodations to the student body schedule.

SSWSA is the official student voice in Social Work Programs affairs. Association representatives may attend social work faculty meetings and may serve on other program committees. SSWSA takes an active role in campus activities and the broader community. Its members coordinate and plan several community service projects a year, as well as invite social work professionals to speak with the club throughout the semester. Additionally, the SSWSA attends the annual NASW Advocacy Days in Boise each spring semester where students gain important networking skills and have the opportunity to participate in advocating for social justice with the Idaho Legislature. Students involved with the SSWSA can expect to form valuable professional and personal relationships, have the opportunity to take part in community service, and acquire experience with planning and organizing events.

Student Course Evaluations

Students provide valuable feedback to faculty and administration through course evaluations. Students have the opportunity to complete course evaluations at the end of each semester in every class. Course evaluations are utilized by social work faculty as a means of program evaluation in making adjustments to

course offerings, course design, and curriculum modifications. In addition, the university utilizes course evaluations in promotion, tenure and advancement decisions concerning professors.

Student Participation in Policy-Making

At least one graduate student representative from both the online program and the campus program is invited each year to participate as a non-voting member of the Social Work Programs Advisory Board.

Student Participation in Faculty Hiring and Promotion

Students actively participate in interviewing new faculty candidates and providing feedback on candidate skills. At least one student is required to participate in faculty tenure committees.

Professional Organizational Involvement

Students are encouraged to join the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). The SSWSA offers partial reimbursement for first year student dues if yearly budget allows. Speakers from NASW are invited to present in classes and NASW website materials are used as references in course development by faculty.

Research Projects

Students are encouraged to participate in faculty research projects as well as further their own research interests through independent study or display at University Student Research Days.

Practicum Placements:

Practicum education is the signature pedagogy of social work education. The intent of direct practice education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with practical experience in a social work agency setting (<https://www.cswe.org/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS>).

Overview

Practicum education and evaluation is organized utilizing a competency based learning approach. Consistent with EPAS 2022, Practicum Education is the signature pedagogy of social work education at Idaho State University in that it represents the central form of instruction and learning in which students are socialized to perform the role of social work practitioner. The intent of practicum-based education is to connect the theoretical and conceptual contribution of the classroom with practical experience in an agency setting. The integrated practicum education program in which faculty, agency instructor and student work together enables the implementation of evidence-informed practice. Each practicum holds increasing expectations and requirements.

Generalist Practice

Students admitted in the two year program have completed a non-social work BS/BA degree with liberal arts educational background. Students are also expected to complete basic biology or general psychology courses, another introductory course in social or behavioral sciences as well as a minimum of 30 hours of paid or volunteer experience in the human services. Such prior basic social work related education and work experience can help students to take practicum as well as courses required for generalist practice.

Full-time students will take eight courses and two consecutive practicums (SOWK 5576, SOWK 5578) and seminars (SOWK 5577, SOWK 5579) over two semesters. These courses include Foundations of Social Work (SOWK 5501), Advanced Human Behavior and Social Environment (SOWK 5510), Direct Practice with Individuals and Families (SOWK 5520), Direct Practice with Groups (SOWK 5550), Social Justice

Advocacy and Policy Practice (SOWK 5571), Practice Interventions with Organizations and Communities (SOWK 5594), Research in Social Work (SOWK 5515), and Applied Research in Social Work (SOWK 6515).

Students will learn about foundational concepts of the social work profession including ethics, values and standard of the social work profession (SOWK 5501). Students will learn about conceptual frameworks to understand human behaviors in the social environment at human development across the lifespan (SOWK 5501) and at mezzo or macro level systems (SOWK 5510). Social diversity and cultural differences will also be discussed (SOWK 5501, SOWK 5510). Generalist practice model is introduced in the relevant courses (SOWK 5501, SOWK 5520, SOWK 5550, and SOWK 5594) at different levels of systems. Students will also learn about theoretical frameworks, skills, and methods of interventions and evaluations of how to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate practice with different levels of client systems (SOWK 5520, SOWK 5550, and SOWK 5594). Students will learn about social advocacy, policy development and basic analysis skills (SOWK 5571). By taking two sequenced research methods in social work (SOWK 5515, SOWK 6515), students will learn about how to utilize scientific inquiry methods and critical thinking to practice.

Students in four-year part-time study programs will take the Foundation Practicums and Seminars in their second year after they complete five courses in their first year. Students will learn about basic social work foundational concepts, generalist practice model, practice skills to work with individuals, families or groups, and basic and applied research methods knowledge and skills before they start to take a practicum placement.

Advanced Clinical Practice

Advanced students in the MSW Program will begin the Advanced Practicum Placement in the fall of their second year for full-time students with standard admissions. Students in four-year part-time study programs will take the Advanced Practicum in the fall of their fourth year. Students admitted with the advanced standing program will take this Advanced Practicum in the fall of their first year with full-time study option as well as in the fall of their second year with part-time two-year study option. In order to obtain advanced placement status, students must have completed a BSW from a CSWE- accredited social work program.

Full-time advanced students will take five core courses, two consecutive advanced practicums and seminars, and three elective courses in one subject of their interest. Five required courses include Advanced Practice Interventions and Comparative Theories (SOWK 6620), Mental Health Evaluations and Strengths-Based Assessments (SOWK 6625), and Advanced Policy, Legislations, and Administration (SOWK 6671) Diversity in Social Work Practice (SOWK 6635)

Building on generalist practice education, students will enhance clinical practice skills by expanding knowledge of advanced practice interventions and comparing theories of social work treatments (SOWK 6620). Students will also extend skills on clinical assessment and diagnosis by learning about how to use the current DSM-V in the evaluation and treatment of mental disorders (SOWK 6625). Students will learn advanced policy analysis and advocacy skills by expanding knowledge and extending skills in the areas of policies, programs and administrative social work (SOWK 6671). Students will complete their advanced practicums over two semesters in their final year. While taking two sequenced advanced internships (SOWK 6676, SOWK 6678) and seminars (SOWK 6677, SOWK 6679), students will integrate and apply the material learned in the classroom and in generalist practice internship or BSW internship. By integrating research, practice, theory, and policy components, students will complete a practice-based research paper with presentation. Additionally, students will be able to gain expertise in an area of children and families or forensic social work by taking three elective courses by expansion of knowledge and enhancing clinical practice skills with that specific client population and its surrounding environments.

Practicum Education

Students will complete Foundation Practicums as part of the Generalist Practice Curriculum and Advanced Practicums as part of the Specialized Practice Curriculum, Advanced Clinical Practice Concentration. The

Practicum experience is a major testing ground for the student's knowledge, values, and skills as well as cognitive and affective reactions. The student is supported in this experience by the leadership and supervision of his/her agency instructor. The practicum structure consists of two components: 1) the agency placement, and 2) the weekly on-campus seminar taught by the faculty director. In placement, under instructor supervision, students experience social work practice through application of the generalist model and the advanced clinical practice framework, including the phases of engagement, assessment, intervention and evaluation. The seminar provides discussion, skills training, and exchange of information about community agency settings. Student exchange of information about practicum experiences is integral to the course. Students and faculty strive to integrate practice theory and academic course work with the practicum experience. The practicum director is the link between the Master of Social Work Program and the agency instructors. Together the practicum instructor of record, student, and agency supervisor evaluate and assess the student's progress and learning needs. The performance indicators used for evaluation are developed in the course syllabus and the student learning agreement.

Student Safety

Every social work student is entitled to completing the practicum experience in a safe environment. Safety education is introduced as a curriculum component in the students' generalist practice course (SOWK 5520, Direct Practice with Individuals and Families). In addition, safety education is provided to students (during seminar) and practicum instructors (during the practicum instructor training). The practicum director visits each site at the beginning of the practicum and addresses potential safety concerns. Students have the right to address safety concerns within their practicum settings with their assigned practicum instructor and/or the practicum director without negative impact on their academic pursuits. The social work programs at ISU follows the [2013 NASW Guidelines for Social Work Safety in the Workplace](#).

Professional Expectations of ISU Social Work Students

The Master of Social Work Program at ISU strives to support social work students in their development as professional practitioners who incorporate the values and ethics of the social work profession. Thus, it is expected that all social work students seek to develop and demonstrate professional values and ethics during their enrollment in the program. This professional behavior should be demonstrated in the interactions with each other, with professors and department staff, in the classroom, in relation to course assignments and attendance, and while interning in social service agencies that are off campus, or any other capacity on campus.

Students, faculty instructors, and agency instructors may complete a rating of the student's professional behavior and progress in each of the practice classes. At any point while a student is enrolled in the MSW program, social work faculty may utilize the below expectations to review the professional performance and progress of the student. If there are concerns, the faculty advisor or instructor may initiate scheduling an appointment with the student to discuss the issue. In some circumstances and at the discretion of the faculty member, the faculty member may opt to request a faculty review committee be convened to discuss concerns. Faculty are not required to attempt to resolve concerns directly with a student prior to engaging a faculty review committee, and they are encouraged to use their best judgment regarding this decision.

In keeping with the NASW Code of Ethics and CSWE Competency Standards, professional expectations for students follow. Noncompliance with these expectations may result in dismissal from the MSW program:

1. **Service.** The Social worker's primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems. Students may demonstrate this professional value through the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely examples:
 - Active participation in service learning requirements of the curriculum.
 - Demonstrating professional values and ethics in their interactions at service learning sites, including being on time, appropriate dress, and readiness to serve.
2. **Social Justice.** Social workers challenge social injustice. Students demonstrate this professional value by the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely examples
 - Sensitivity in speech and actions when relating to persons who have experienced discrimination and oppression.
 - Learning ways to seek social change and advocate for a more just society.
3. **Dignity and Worth of the Person.** Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person. Students demonstrate this professional value by the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely examples:
 - Speaking and behaving in ways that show respect for others.
 - Refraining from behaviors which interfere with the learning process in the classroom, in academic advising, or work environment in the practicum setting.
4. **Importance of Human Relationships.** Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships. Students demonstrate this professional value by the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely examples.
 - Forming and sustaining positive working relationships with others, including using appropriate channels to resolve conflicts.
 - Accept responsibility for their own behavior in interaction with others.
 - Giving and accepting feedback in a constructive manner.
5. **Integrity.** Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner. Students demonstrate this professional value by the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely examples.
 - Meeting class or practicum responsibilities, including preparation and active participation. This includes completing all assigned coursework and readings.

- Doing own work and taking credit for own work—no plagiarizing, cheating, dishonesty in assignments and examinations.
 - Treating any personal information in a strictly confidential manner (i.e., never disclose identifying information; maintain information shared in class, small groups or practicum within that unit; use judgment in self-disclosing personal information).
 - If and when a student chooses to make a decision that does not demonstrate the level of professional integrity we expect of future professionals, we expect that students will be appropriately responsive to feedback from their faculty, advisors, or department chair and redirect or revisit their decisions accordingly.
6. **Competence.** Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise. Students demonstrate this professional value by the following behaviors. Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list, these are merely exemplars.:
- Attending class and practicum as scheduled, completing work, doing readings.
 - Utilizing resources as needed (e.g., Writing Center, Counseling Center, Advising, and Supervision).
 - Accepting, applying and benefiting from constructive feedback.
 - Seriously considering life commitments and course load in order to devote sufficient attention to studies.

In addition to the aforementioned professional ethics, MSW students are responsible for the following program level behavioral expectations regarding academic integrity:

- a. Students shall not submit work that is plagiarized or AI generated. Students may utilize AI only if expressly permitted by a course instructor.
- b. Students shall be accountable for any work submitted in their name and all of its contents. If a student chooses to submit a group project with their name attached to it, that student is accountable if any of the contents of the project are plagiarized or AI generated. If a student chooses to submit AI generated work that has hallucinated references, or makes unethical or dishonest claims, the student shall be held accountable for those claims.
- c. Attempting to register in classes that co-occur on the same date and time is not allowed.
- d. Attempting to manipulate attendance or participation in order to avoid direct work or direct accountability is not allowed.
- e. Attending a zoom-based course with your camera off while simultaneously engaging in other activities (i.e. working at your job, running errands, cleaning your house, or simply not participating in class) will not be tolerated.
- f. This is not an exhaustive list, and students shall strive not to actively engage in other forms of academic dishonesty. Students can be held accountable for behaviors deemed dishonest even if they are not expressly listed in this document.

Student Performance Expectations:

All MSW students are expected to maintain an average GPA of 3.0 or better (on a 4.0 scale). All graduate level courses must be passed with a grade of B- or better, and any grade that falls below this threshold will not be considered a sufficient grade to pass the class. Students may be required to repeat a failed course. Students who fail to meet this expectation are subject to a remediation plan and/or termination from the MSW Program. In some cases, students may be restricted to enrollment in no more than nine credits, or be asked to delay enrollment for one semester to address challenges that are impeding degree completion. In all such cases, students are required to meet with their MSW advisor and develop a specific plan to move toward degree completion or withdrawal from the MSW program.

Enrollment Requirements

Graduate students are required to be registered for at least one 3-credit graduate course in both fall and spring semesters to remain in good standing. Students are not required to take coursework in the summer. Students who are unable to attend in fall or in spring should speak with their primary advisor to discuss our leave of absence policy (see below).

Policy on Providing a Program Verification Form for Social Work Licensing Exams:

The ISU MSW program encourages students to take their masters level licensing exam in a timely manner; however, students should strive to complete required coursework prior to taking their licensing exam. Students who wish to schedule their licensing exam prior to graduation may receive a program verification form from the MSW Program Director if they have met the following criteria:

1. Students must be in good academic standing.
2. Students must be in their final semester of coursework.. Verification forms will be provided to students no earlier than March 15th.
3. Students who are attending part-time may be eligible to obtain this verification form prior to their last semester of coursework if they have completed all required coursework.
4. Requests for verification forms for students who do not meet the above criteria will be evaluated by the MSW Program Director on a case-by-case basis.
5. Students with a documented disability may request a verification form earlier in order to provide additional time to arrange accommodations with the licensing board. In this case, the program will provide a verification form no earlier than February 15th.

Leaves of Absence

Graduate students are required to be registered for both fall and spring semesters to remain in good standing. However, in cases of illness or other life events, graduate students may ask for a semester-length leave of absence from the Graduate School for fall or spring semesters without losing standing. (Leaves of absence longer than one semester, or a series of leaves of absences, will not be allowed without approval of the program director and department chair.) To request a leave of absence, the student must email the MSW Program Director to make a formal request. The MSW program does not require that students take courses in the summer. If a student does not take a formal leave of absence, termination from the program may be advanced. If a student does not take a formal leave of absence, their ability to return to the program will be dependent upon space and there is no guarantee that a return will be approved.

Policy on Married Couples/Families in a Cohort

The MSW program has the following policy regarding married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives who are simultaneously enrolled in our program:

- Married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives may not work together on group projects. All non-group based student work must be independently completed and married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives may not complete or submit work on behalf of the other person.
- Married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives are not allowed to attend synchronous online courses from the same computer. Every individual in the program must have their own computer with a working internet connection, microphone, and camera, in order to attend remote classes. All students must have a dedicated work

space for remote classroom attendance and make every effort to minimize feedback from additional attendees who may be in the same physical location. If these groups attempt to participate in a class from the same computer/camera/audio, they will be removed from the class and marked absent.

- Married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives retain their FERPA protections regarding confidentiality. Faculty and Staff at ISU are unable to discuss any student specific information with anybody other than that student. This remains true even if the students are married, related, or in another type of relationship. Students are responsible for communicating with their faculty as needed and cannot rely on others to do so for them.
- Practicum Manual: Married couples, intimate partners, and/or closely associated relatives will need special approval from the Practicum Director if they would like to complete a practicum in the same agency setting. The Practicum Director may work with the Task Supervisor, Social Work Supervisor, and Program Director to evaluate a request of this nature.

Grievance Policies and Procedures

The ISU MSW program's grievance policies and procedures are available on the Graduate School's website. A link to this information will be also included in letters of dismissal from the program. Graduate students who wish to appeal final grades must use the following procedural format within one semester following the posting of the grade.

In compliance with the academic policies outlined in the Graduate Catalog (<http://coursecat.isu.edu/graduate/generalinfoandpolicies/appealsanddismissals/>), the appeal process involves the following steps. When a student receives a grade that is judged by that student to be unjustifiably low, a student is strongly encouraged to seek informal solutions by discussing the matter with the instructor of the course. If the instructor believes the original grade given to be accurate, the student may file a formal appeal. The student must prepare a formal written statement in accordance with the format presented in the "Protocol for Appealing a Grade".

At the next level of appeal of a student, the Department chair will review the student's and the instructor's written statements. The chair must render a decision within 15 working days of receipt of the student's appeal documents. The Dean of College of Arts and Letters is next in the formal appeal process. The committee of graduate faculty members' deliberation and the Dean's decision must be completed within 30 working days of receipt of the student's appeal in the Dean's office. If the decision of the Dean is not accepted by the student, the appeal may be taken by the student to the Graduate Council. At the request of the student, the Graduate Council will review all appeal documentation and respond with a decision within 30 working days of receipt of the student's appeal. Once the decision is made, it is final and will be communicated by the Dean of the Graduate School.

After each step in the procedures for the appeal of a grade, all written appeal request and decision statements must be copied to all involved parties (e.g., the student, the instructor, the department chair, the Dean of College of Arts and Letters). At any stage where the appeal process is concluded, the last appeal level will process a change of grade, if appropriate, using standard procedures.

Faculty Review Committees and the Student Disciplinary Process

At any time throughout the semester if a referral involving a concern about a social work student's academic, ethical, or professional behavior is raised, a social work faculty review committee may be convened. Faculty are not required to address concerns directly with a student prior to requesting a review committee be convened. Concerns may be raised by faculty, practicum instructors, and/or students pertaining to compliance of expected professional behavior and ethical conduct and academic integrity. The process is

intended to be a problem-solving forum with intent to stimulate student personal and professional growth and/or to assert the gatekeeping mandate of the profession.

A FRC may be convened in the event that there are significant concerns with a student's academic performance which include but are not limited to:

1. A pattern of low academic performance as evidenced by grades of C+ or below in social work specific courses, or more than two withdrawals from social work courses.
2. Difficulty with adequate performance in practicum placement.
3. Termination from a practicum site.
4. Failure to attend scheduled advising appointments.
5. Engaging in behaviors deemed unethical or otherwise non-reflective of the professional standards outlined in the Social Work Code of Ethics. These behaviors may be observed in an academic setting, advising setting, practicum setting, or any other institutionally-sponsored setting such as graduate school events or program social events.
6. Concerns regarding a student's ability or willingness to engage in social work practice in a healthy, evidence-based, emotionally regulated capacity.
7. The student has expressed a strong sense of disagreement regarding the NASW code of ethics and has implied or implemented noncompliance in the academic or practicum setting.
8. A student has been incarcerated.
9. Concerns related to the student's capacity to comply with the NASW code of ethics, or the student has engaged in behaviors that reflect noncompliance with the NASW code of ethics.

Once a referral for a review has been made, a committee will be assembled based on faculty availability. The committee will have a minimum of 3 faculty members but may include additional members if determined necessary or appropriate by the program director. The committee will include the Program Director; however, if the Program Director needs to recuse themselves from participation for any reason the Program Director will either appoint a faculty replacement to head the committee or the Department Chair may serve in this capacity. The Program Director or committee chair will notify the student that a committee is being convened no less than five business days in advance of the scheduled meeting.

The FRC may ask the student to participate in the process at the discretion of the committee chair. If a student is invited to attend this meeting they are invited to bring a support person to this meeting. Students may submit a formal request to attend the meeting even if an invitation has not been extended. A request must be submitted in writing no less than two business days prior to the meeting date and time and shall be submitted to the committee chair. If a student attends the meeting they will be allowed to make a statement and answer questions from the committee. The student will be asked to leave the meeting while the committee discusses next steps. All students who attend a committee meeting must attend virtually via an online platform such as zoom. The FRC may make recommendations on how the program can better support the student through academic probation or oversight, changes to practicum placement, recommendations to reduce academic course load, implement peer-mentoring, increased faculty advising and oversight, or other recommendations as identified by the FRC. In some cases a student may be placed on a performance improvement plan. If this happens, the student will be asked to meet with either the program director or the designated committee chair to review and sign the plan. If a student is unwilling to sign a performance improvement plan, they will be dismissed from the program. If a performance improvement plan is not put in place, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome of the meeting and any recommendations or requirements that have been put in place.

Termination from the Master of Social Work Program

Students participation in the Social Work Program may be terminated on the basis of professional non-suitability if the students behavior has demonstrated a significant violation or pattern of violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, the Idaho Social Work Examiners Laws and Rules, the ISU Social Work Student Handbook, and/or the ISU Code of Student Conduct. These violations may include but are not limited to:

1. Failure to meet or maintain academic standards as established at admission.
2. Academic dishonesty.
3. Demonstrated failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite to fulfill academic responsibilities or professional practice responsibilities as a social worker.
4. Inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty or staff (at the school or in practicum placement).
5. Documented evidence of criminal misconduct during the course.

The social work department follows graduate school policies and guidelines on termination of students.

The student has the right to appeal the decision of the Faculty Review Committee. For further appeal action, the student should consult the [Graduate Catalog of the current Academic Catalog under Appeals and Dismissals](#) and in the [Idaho State University Student Conduct Code](#).

Program Faculty

Social Work Program faculty members all have advanced social work degrees (MSW, DSW, or Ph.D.) as well as direct practice experience. In addition to teaching, faculty members also serve in professional capacities and engage in research activities to further the profession of social work. Please see our [Faculty & Staff](#) page for social work faculty teaching, specialties, and research interests

Useful Links:

[National Association of Social Workers \(NASW\) Code of Ethics](#)

[Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses](#)

[Council of Social Work Education \(CSWE\)](#)

[CSWE Policy and Accreditation Standards](#)

[Admission Requirements to MSW Program](#)

[Online Graduate School Application for Admission to Master of Social Work Program](#)

Student Services:

[ADA & Disability Resource Center](#)

[Registration & Records](#)

[Library](#)

[Student Success Center](#)

[ISU Counseling Center](#) (free counseling services for students)

Addendum

Idaho Medical Freedom Act Compliance and Clinical Participation Disclosure

Idaho State University complies with Senate Bill 1210 (2025), the *Idaho Medical Freedom Act*. In alignment with this law, ISU and its academic programs do **NOT** require students to receive vaccinations, undergo diagnostic testing, or participate in other medical interventions as a condition of:

- Admission or enrollment
- Participation in coursework
- Campus access
- Employment with the university

However, many ISU programs—inclusive of undergraduate and graduate social work programs—require clinical education or experiential learning at external facilities that may include hospitals, pharmacies, and clinics. These third-party clinical sites may independently require:

- Immunizations (e.g., MMR, Varicella, Hepatitis B, Tdap, Influenza, COVID-19)
- TB testing or other disease screenings
- Physical examinations
- Use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Completion of infection control training

Participation in practicum education is mandatory for program completion, licensure eligibility, and graduation. Students who decline to meet clinical site requirements may face:

- Delayed clinical placement
- Extended program length
- Ineligibility for graduation or licensure

Students may request medical or religious exemptions from clinical site requirements. However, approval is at the sole discretion of the clinical site, not ISU, and ISU may not be able to guarantee alternative placements for students who decline required interventions.

Exceptions and Caveats: In some cases, participation in **federally funded programs** or research partnerships (e.g., Idaho National Laboratory or VA facilities) may include health and safety requirements governed by federal law. In such instances, compliance with those federal requirements may be necessary to access the opportunity.

ISU may require the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing, or items required under established industry standards or federal regulations. Programs and sites may still require PPE and related training for health and safety reasons.

Professional Expectations: While not required by ISU, students preparing for careers in healthcare and human services are strongly encouraged to stay up to date on recommended immunizations and preventive screenings. Doing so reflects the professional values of safeguarding patient health, protecting vulnerable populations, and modeling best practices in clinical and community settings.

Employment Consideration: Students should also be aware that employers may impose similar requirements for employment. Choosing not to undergo specific medical interventions may limit future job opportunities.

Note on Drug Screenings and Background Checks: Drug and alcohol screenings, background checks, and other safety-related assessments are not considered medical interventions under SB 1210 and may continue to be required by ISU programs.

Assumption of Risk Form:

Programs may, at their discretion, ask students to sign the [Clinical Education and Assumption of Risk Form](#), updated July 28, 2025, to acknowledge understanding of the clinical education process, including associated risks and site-specific requirements. This form is available on the KDHS website and may be used to support student awareness, documentation, and accreditation needs. Social Work program students at ISU will be asked to sign the assumption of risk form if they opt into a practicum placement where vaccination protocols are required as a term or condition of the placement.



Clinical Education Assumption of Risk

Participation in clinical education, including clinical simulations in didactic settings, is required by professional accreditation standards for health sciences programs. Any placement in a healthcare facility (including hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, or other such entities) for the purpose of clinical education entails certain risks, including the risk of exposure to infectious diseases and other personal injuries. Similarly, there exists some level of risk in didactic settings. While every effort will be made to minimize risks to students, staff, and faculty, the elimination of all such risks is beyond the control of the program or university.

Vaccination for many infectious diseases, including COVID-19, may be required by a healthcare facility for placement in clinical education. Idaho State University recommends, but does not require, the COVID-19 vaccination. All health science students may receive a COVID-19 vaccination free of charge. If unvaccinated, restrictions upon student activities may be imposed by the clinical placement site. Placement at certain healthcare facilities may be contingent on vaccination status and requirements may change without notice. Educational opportunities missed due to lack of vaccination may delay graduation and/or result in additional educational expenses to the student.

I freely and voluntarily accept the health risks and potential clinical placement site requirements described above to complete my clinical educational requirements. Before engaging in clinical education, please read, initial, and sign the following:

Initials

- _____1. I will not participate in clinical education if I exhibit any signs/symptoms of infection, including but not limited to: runny nose, fever, cough, shortness of breath, head or body aches, sore throat, loss of smell, or nausea/vomiting/diarrhea. If I exhibit any of these signs/symptoms, I will notify the appropriate person(s) at my clinical placement and my designated program contact person.
- _____2. I will comply with clinical placement policies related to facial covering/glove wearing and handwashing and disinfecting procedures before and after all patient encounters and at other times as specified.
- _____3. I will complete any required infection control or PPE training by my program or the clinical placement.
- _____4. I will follow all infection control guidelines, policies, and procedures of the clinical placement, program, and university. Such guidelines are subject to change.
- _____5. I recognize the dangers to myself and others of acquiring infectious diseases during clinical education, including the possibility of health related consequences of such diseases. I recognize that vaccination for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases is recommended to decrease the risk of these consequences.
- _____6. I have the right to feel safe during clinical education. I have the ability to talk to my clinical instructor regarding any concerns I may have related to breaches in infection control measures or public health recommendations at any clinical placement.
- _____7. I recognize I have the right not to participate in clinical education because of the potential risk to myself and/or members of my household. I recognize that any missed clinical education time due to lack of participation or required quarantine time will need to be made up to complete program requirements and may delay my graduation.
- _____8. If I test positive for COVID-19, or any other contagious virus, I will notify my program's clinical coordinator and complete the self-report form. I will follow all ISU or health facility-related screening requirements.

Documenting Exemptions:

Students may request an exemption to a clinical placement site's vaccination requirement for valid medical or religious reasons. If a student chooses not to be vaccinated for a medical or religious reason and seeks an exemption from the vaccination requirement imposed by a clinical placement, further documentation may be required by the site. Some clinical placements may facilitate the religious exemption request themselves and the student will need to complete the site's appropriate form. Other sites may ask the university to help facilitate this process.

Decisions to accept an exemption request are generally up to the clinical site.

Medical exemption requests: Students should work with the ISU Office of Disability Services for disability accommodations. Students can fill out a Student Request for Services Form or call (208) 282-3599 (Pocatello), (208) 373-1723 (Meridian), or email disabilityservices@isu.edu. Upon the conclusion of the accommodation process, the Office of Disability Services will email a letter to the student with the decision of the medical exemption request for submission to any requesting clinical placement.

Religious exemption requests: Students should work with the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX for a religious exemption request by completing the Religious Exemption Request Form. The Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX will email a letter to the student with the decision of the religious exemption request for submission to any requesting clinical placement. Students can reach the Office of Equal Opportunity and Title IX at (208) 282- 3964 or email quingrac@isu.edu to request the form.

Opt-out Guidelines:

In general, satisfactory progression through professional curricula requires that students complete clinical and didactic course requirements in the semester in which they are enrolled. Programmatic requirements are based on professional accreditation standards and licensing board requirements, and include clinical education activities. Should a student be unable to complete requirements due to illness or CDC recommended isolation/quarantine, make-up work may be allowed if congruent with programmatic or university policies for other medically related absences. Should a student choose not to complete any course or program requirement related to clinical education, the student is responsible for contacting the course instructor and providing a rationale for "opting out." Opt-out policies may vary between programs; students should contact their individual programs for specifics on process. Delays in progression and/or graduation may occur if a student chooses to opt-out of any aspect of required coursework.

Other potential consequences and considerations:

Clinical placement sites may limit the types of patient populations with whom unvaccinated students may interact. For example, some sites do not allow students to see patients with acute respiratory illness or to interact with pregnant patients if they have not been vaccinated for COVID 19 and other infectious diseases. A student's satisfactory progression through clinical education may be impeded if students cannot demonstrate adequate training in such patient populations.

Sharing Information with Clinical Placement Site

If a student tests positive for COVID-19 or any other contagious virus, this information may need to be shared with clinical site preceptors. A separate FERPA waiver form will need to be signed by the student and completed for each preceptor site with whom test results are to be shared. This form is available online and in the Health Occupations Department main office.

This assumption of risk agreement is in effect for the course of the program of study or until replaced with a subsequent executed assumption of risk agreement form a new document is signed, whichever is greater.

I have read, understand, and voluntarily accept the risks outlined above. By signing this document, I acknowledge that I am assuming full responsibility for any potential risks associated with the activity or situation described

Student Name (Print)

Student's Signature

Date