



**St AMBROSE  
UNIVERSITY**

Master of Social Work

**Student Policy Manual  
Master of Social Work Program**

**2023 – 2024**

MSW Program Location:  
North Davenport Education Center  
1950 E 54<sup>th</sup> St.  
Davenport, IA 52807

Mailing address:  
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Please Note: Spring 2024 (Higgins Hall-St Ambrose University-Main Campus)

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## **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK MISSION AND VISION**

**MISSION:** It is the mission of the St. Ambrose University School of Social Work to prepare competent and ethical social work professionals who advocate a just society.

**VISION:** Consistent with the purposes of social work and Catholic Social Teaching, the St. Ambrose University School of Social Work seeks to advance the well-being of people, to promote social and economic justice and to protect human rights. Emphasizing client system empowerment, the School prepares graduates to practice competently, ethically and with critical understanding of diversity, human behavior and social contexts.

Students acquire a comprehensive knowledge base, practice skills, and ethical standards for professional practice. These competencies enable graduates to provide resources and opportunities for people to live with dignity and freedom in their transactions with each other and social institutions locally, nationally, and globally.

### **MSW MISSION**

The St. Ambrose University Master of Social Work program prepares empowerment social workers to use a life-long praxis process in order to ensure collaborative, client-centered, multi-level, contextualized practice. Empowerment social workers promote professional social work and advocate for social, economic and environmental justice.

### **BSW MISSION**

The St. Ambrose University Bachelor of Social Work program prepares holistic social workers grounded in liberal arts and social justice traditions to enrich lives, facilitate empowerment, and advocate a just society as generalist professionals. Through that generalist lens, the BSW program cultivates the desire to change society at multiple levels by equipping students with knowledge, skills, and values indicative of ethical social work practice.

## **ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES MISSION AND VISION**

**MISSION:** The College of Health and Human Services prepares exemplary professionals through innovative programs in the health sciences, human services, and education. We are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and collaboration through interdisciplinary and community-based partnerships.

**VISION:** The CHHS will be valued for preparing creative and critically thinking professionals who are recognized as leaders in their field and advocates for social justice in their communities.

## **ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY MISSION AND VISION**

**MISSION:** St. Ambrose University – independent, diocesan, and Catholic-- enables its students to develop intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically, and physically in order to enrich their own lives and the lives of others.

**VISION:** St. Ambrose will be recognized as a leading Midwestern university rooted in its diocesan heritage and the Catholic Intellectual Tradition. Ambrosians are committed to academic excellence, the liberal arts, social justice and service.

**ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK GENERALIST AND  
EMPOWERMENT SPECIALIZATION 2015 EPAS COMPETENCIES AND  
BEHAVIORS**

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

*Generalist observable components*

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. Social workers:

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and
- use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

*Empowerment Specialization observable components*

Implementing an empowerment approach to ethical social work practice requires a social worker's extensive self-awareness. This awareness is based on self-reflection; information from clients, colleagues, and supervisors; scientific knowledge; and ethical analysis of all practice decisions and behaviors. Essential areas of ethical analysis for empowering social workers emphasize the worker's socio-cultural location and its impact on practice, as well as the extent to which the worker-client relationship

facilitates empowerment. A praxis process incorporating sources of self-awareness and ethical analysis cycles through phases of reflection, action, and further reflection steers empowerment-oriented workers toward accountability to clients, community, and the social work profession.

Empowerment social workers:

- evaluate professional actions utilizing a praxis process of reflection- action- reflection informed by clients, colleagues, supervisors, and scientific knowledge.
- resolve ethical dilemmas inherent in the empowerment method.

## **Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice**

### ***Generalist observable components***

Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to 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. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences.
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

### ***Empowerment Specialization observable components***

Empowerment social workers understand collaboration with clients and communities representing diverse identities is an essential aspect for implementing an empowerment method. To build collaborative partnerships that respect, invite, and ensure voice to clients from all disempowered clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

Empowerment-oriented practitioners require relationship abilities and communication expertise. The relationship skills of social workers are grounded in the knowledge,

skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes. These skills are derived from the cultural competency model and the importance of contextualizing this competency for each individual through cultural humility. Empowerment-based practice builds on these cultural models and implements a strengths perspective that respects each client's privilege and expertise. A strengths perspective moves empowering social workers to emphasize the strengths of diverse clients and views each client as having potential to meet their individual challenges.

Empowerment social workers:

- collaborate effectively with diverse client, colleague, and community populations.
- demonstrate an understanding of cultural competence and cultural humility in acknowledging the strengths and inherent power of client populations from diverse backgrounds.

### **Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

#### ***Generalist observable components***

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels.
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

#### ***Empowerment Specialization observable components***

Empowerment social work professionals are committed to advancing human rights and social justice. An empowerment-oriented practitioner understands the impact of environmental power dynamics on the identity, development, well-being, and opportunities of individuals and groups. Empowering practitioners analyze the ways in which people's experience of power is shaped by social and cultural systems, social policy, agency protocols, and global dynamics. In keeping with the goal of

empowerment, practitioners act on this knowledge to contribute to a more just and equal society.

In addition to their understanding of the sociocultural forces that impact justice and human well-being, empowerment professionals recognize the significance of the natural environment and its impact, globally and locally, upon both human and non-human species. Practitioners understand an ecological perspective that reveals the interdependence of all life on earth.

Empowerment social workers:

- effectively challenge in self and others the disempowering attitudes and behaviors that contribute to social injustices, oppression, and discrimination.
- work individually and collectively to advocate policies at multiple levels which support social justice, protect human rights, and promote the well-being of non-human species, habitats and ecosystems

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

##### *Generalist observable components*

Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings.
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

##### *Empowerment Specialization observable components*

A distinguishing quality of empowerment practice is the use of “evidence” from a client’s perspective in balance with knowledge and evidence generated through social work research. “What constitutes valid evidence?” is a critical question in the use of evidence to guide social work practice, prompting workers to critically evaluate new knowledge, its sources for credibility, and applicability in each unique practice situation.

Empowering workers continuously evaluate their practices through the lens of new knowledge and by accessing voices from clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders.

Empowerment social workers:

- tailor evidence-supported strategies to fit unique client situations
- design, implement, and analyze program evaluations that access stakeholders' views

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

### ***Generalist observable components***

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services.
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services.
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

### ***Empowerment Specialization observable components***

All effective social work practitioners actively engage in policy practice. They recognize the role of policy in service delivery and the effects of social policy on a client's experience. To implement an empowering process, workers acknowledge the pervasive influence of domestic and global social policy in every practice endeavor and use this understanding in their consciousness-raising efforts with clients. Empowering practitioners work individually and collectively to influence service delivery, policy formulation, and legislative change.

Empowerment social workers:

- challenge unjust social and economic policies in all practice activities
- engage in collective action to influence political and economic forces that contribute to individual and community problems

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

### *Generalist observable components*

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

### *Empowerment Specialization observable components*

An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in engagement elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.

Empowerment social work practitioners engage with clients informing purposeful partnerships, balancing client strengths with challenges, and in recognizing client expertise, experience, and resources. To facilitate engagement, empowerment social workers require an astute understanding of human diversity and consistently practice with an understanding of cultural humility.

Empowerment social workers:

- use self-awareness and feedback to construct empowering relationships in collaboration with clients.
- facilitate client system engagement at the micro mezzo and macro levels.

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

### ***Generalist observable components***

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

### ***Empowerment Specialization observable components***

An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in assessment elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.

Empowerment social workers comprehensively assess client situations utilizing a social justice ethic in order to recognize social and political roots of individual experience and assess opportunities for change with clients and in their environments.

Empowerment social workers:

- practice cultural responsiveness by using assessment tools in ways sensitive to client diversity
- assess factors of risk and resilience that hinder or promote client

system competence

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

### ***Generalist observable components***

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies.
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies.
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes.
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies.
- facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

### ***Empowerment Specialization observable components***

An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in intervention elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.

The empowerment method directs practitioners as an ethical mandate to intervene across system levels. Workers bridge individually-oriented methods with group, organizational, and community efforts to help clients ally with others, broaden the participation of clients in defining service priorities, and involve clients as key constituents in systems of service delivery. This multilevel intervention is signature to

empowerment practice, whereby the way in which the social worker intervenes with clients is never separate from the multiple contexts which reinforce the oppressive problem-maintaining environment.

Empowerment social workers:

- use strength-oriented empowerment processes to heighten efficacy, competence, and political consciousness
- demonstrate practice skills necessary to achieve change through integrated clinical and political social work strategies

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

### *Generalist observable components*

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes.
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes.
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes.
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

### *Empowerment Specialization observable components*

An empowerment method builds upon the generalist foundation in understanding and acting on the dynamic interplay between clients and multiple systems including social, cultural, and political contexts as well as physical environments. Collaboration in evaluation elevates subjugated knowledge, activates energy to achieve goals, and exemplifies the value stance of an empowering social work professional in actualizing the principles of self-determination, individualization, the personal as political, and acceptance.

Empowerment practice is reflective practice. Empowerment practitioners thoughtfully apply scientific knowledge to practice situations, construct practice processes to generate practice-based evidence, engage clients as active partners in critically

evaluating the work, and reflect on their own values and skills.

Empowerment social workers:

- continuously monitor and measure own practice effectiveness incorporating the client's perspective
- actively involve clients in all steps of program evaluation and practice research

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK OVERARCHING GOALS

- Goal 1.** Maintain accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) of the programs contained within it.
- The competencies proposed by CSWE and the behaviors subsequently developed by Program faculty serve to guide the professional training of students in competent and ethical directions.
- Goal 2.** Contribute to the mission of the College of Health and Human Services: *“The College of Health and Human Services prepares exemplary professionals through innovative programs in the health sciences, human services, and education. We are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and collaboration through interdisciplinary and community-based partnerships.”*
- The mission of the School of Social Work is clearly aligned with the mission of CHHS. These commitments to all areas of academic appointment enhance each entity.
  - In course offerings, co-curricular events, and informal interaction, the School of Social Work seeks to model the mission of the College of Health and Human Services.
- Goal 3.** Support the mission of the University: *“St. Ambrose University-independent, diocesan, and Catholic-enables its students to develop intellectually, spiritually, ethically, socially, artistically, and physically to enrich their own lives and the lives of others.”*
- The mission of the School of Social Work is clearly aligned with the mission of the larger university, with its focus on both individuals and society.

## MSW PROGRAM GOALS

- Goal 1.** Provide a quality educational program in empowerment social work practice designed to assure the acquisition of advanced knowledge, skills, values, cognitive/affective processes, and ethics necessary for professional social work practice. Graduates of the MSW program show strengths in these skills due to intensive focus on these competencies and the program’s commitment to empowerment practice.
- In collaboration with other health science programs at St. Ambrose and CSWE, the MSW program provides multiple contexts for Interprofessional education promoting team-based client care.

**Goal 2.** Prepare social work practitioners with generalist and empowerment specialization skills to enable them to engage in multi-level interventions with diverse populations in a range of social servicesettings.

- MSW courses utilize components of empowerment practice including multi-level intervention, promotion of diversity, politicized practice, and systemic analysis combine to allow for understanding and applicability across practice settings.
- Students build knowledge and skills in the empowerment method in order to promote a just global society for all people.

**Goal 3.** Nurture University-Agency partnerships by facilitating an educational and scholarship presence in the local, national, and international communities.

- MSW faculty participate in education, scholarship, leadership and service in these communities utilizing and promoting an empowerment stance to and with constituents.
- MSW Program faculty provide training to agencies regarding empowerment practice, ethics, and diversity to name a few. Continuing education offerings by the MSW program focus on needs of the social work practice community.
- Faculty involvement in community, state, national and international boards of directors exemplifies the mission of the University, the School and the MSW Program by focusing on the empowerment of people in those areas. In this way, faculty service is putting the empowerment method in practice.
- Field education processes seek to strengthen relationships and build bridges between the School and regional social service and health service providers.

**Goal 4.** Contribute to the knowledge base of the social work profession by engaging in scholarship for publication and presentation at professional conferences.

- Using a broad model of scholarship including: scholarship of discovery, of integration, of application, of teaching and learning, and of engagement, faculty collect and share information in order to best serve populations which social workers serve.
- Social Workers advocate changes in society through these endeavors. Contribution to the knowledge base of the social work profession is key to the MSW Program.
- Empowerment Scholarship has an explicit goal to positively impact the greater society.

## ADMISSIONS

The School of Social Work administers its own Admissions procedures in both the MSW and BSW Programs. The MSW procedures are in full compliance with University regulations for graduate admissions, using a required standard application and financial assistance forms, and following reporting and recording procedures. The School is responsible for recruiting, evaluating, and admitting students into the MSW Program. The admissions process is supported by the MSW Program Admissions Committee composed of faculty members including the Admissions Coordinator and with facilitation by the Online Program Coordinator. Admissions standards, criteria, and processes are described fully in the catalog and the application packet distributed to applicants.

### **Criteria for Admission to the MSW Program**

Admission to the program is limited to graduates of accredited colleges and universities. Applicants must have acquired a foundational liberal arts perspective, as determined by a review of course work in the humanities and social sciences (see below) by the MSW Program Admissions Committee. It is suggested (but not required) that students take a statistics course before entering the program.

### **Admission Procedures**

The admissions process includes application to the University and application to the MSW program. To apply to the program, students should submit the following directly to the School of Social Work:

1. Complete the Application for Admission to Graduate Studies online at [www.sau.edu/apply](http://www.sau.edu/apply). Submit Supplemental Application Information for the MSW Program and official transcripts to the School of Social Work, 518 W. Locust St., Davenport, IA 52803 or by email to [msw@sau.edu](mailto:msw@sau.edu).
2. Submit a personal statement of educational and career goals as indicated by the prompts on the social work application and submit to MSW Program.
3. Submit two (2) references directly to the MSW Program. Use the digital reference forms provided. References should be professional or academic contacts who are in a position to judge your potential for social work practice and graduate study. It is the student's responsibility to see that references submit completed forms.

Application forms and a program description may be obtained by visiting the Master of Social Work Program website at <http://www.sau.edu/master-of-social-work>. Your application cannot be reviewed until all application materials are received. Application for admission is a rolling admission, meaning that applications are considered on an ongoing basis until the deadline for each admission period. Admission will close when all student positions are filled. It is to your advantage to complete the application process early.

Application deadlines are as follows: Two year program (fall)—May 1; Three year program (fall)—August 1; One year program (summer)—April 1. To be eligible for departmental scholarships, fellowships and graduate assistantships, students must be fully accepted into the MSW program.

In addition to meeting the eligibility criteria of St. Ambrose Graduate Studies, the MSW program requires:

- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited college or university with evidence of a liberal arts foundation to include the following minimum credit hours: social and behavioral sciences (18 hours); humanities (9 hours)
- The Admissions Committee will review the applicant's transcript to determine that the liberal arts requirement is satisfied.

The social and behavioral sciences include:

- Anthropology, biomedical history, communications, economics, environmental studies, geography, history, international studies, political science, psychology, social work, sociology, urban planning, women's studies, and all ethnic studies courses.

Humanities include:

- Architecture, art, art history, classics, comparative literature, dance, drama, English, landscape architecture, linguistics, music, philosophy, religious studies, speech communication, all foreign languages and literature.

### **Admissions Decisions**

Decisions on admissions will be determined using the following criteria:

- Demonstrated potential for graduate studies by maintaining a 3.0 or better undergraduate grade point average for the last 60 credit hours.
- Evidence of interest, ability, and potential for professional social work practice on an advanced level as demonstrated by a personal statement responding to prompts in the application and two (2) letters of recommendation.

After each application is reviewed by the Admissions Committee, an admissions decision is made. The committee does not make its decision on one factor alone; each factor is considered in light of the total application. Decisions include acceptance, provisional acceptance, and denial of admission. Emailed notification of admission is sent to the applicant. Applicants can reply that they plan to attend, choose not to, or defer acceptance for up to one year.

All offers of admission are contingent upon receipt of final transcripts indicating conferral of a bachelor's degree. In special circumstances in the 2 year and 3 year programs, students with a GPA below 3.0 may be admitted provisionally by the discretion of the admissions committee. For retention in the MSW program, provisional status requires students to earn a 3.0 GPA in their first 12 credit hours. GPAs are reviewed at the time of admission and again when final transcripts are submitted. Students initially admitted provisionally will be moved to non-provisional status if their final GPA is 3.0 or higher. Students initially admitted non-provisionally will be moved to provisional status if their final GPA falls below 3.0.

**Admissions Appeal Procedure**

Applicants for admission to the Master of Social Work program have a right to appeal an adverse recommendation related to admission to the MSW program to the Director of the School of Social Work.

**Transfer of Credit**

Students transferring from other CSWE accredited graduate programs of social work must complete the standard application and submit the same documentation as other potential students. These applicants must meet the same admissions criteria used to evaluate all applicants and be in good standing with the former program. The course descriptions and syllabi are reviewed by the Director to ensure that the courses, for which transfer credit is awarded, are congruent with the mission and goals of the St. Ambrose MSW Program. Up to 30 credits can be transferred into the School of Social Work, with transfer students required to complete the specialization curriculum at St. Ambrose University. If the student has not completed equivalent required foundation courses, these must be taken before the student can progress to the advanced specialization curriculum. Only courses completed with a 3.0 or better can be transferred from another graduate social work program.

**Credit for Life Experience**

Academic credit towards field practicum or coursework for life experiences and previous work experiences is not given, in whole or in part, in lieu of the field practicum or required coursework.

## **SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIPS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

At St. Ambrose University, there are four basic ways to finance your graduate education: personal financing, loans, assistantships, and scholarships. To be considered for any type of financial assistance, you must complete a Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA) or a FAFSA renewal form. Students planning to begin studies during the summer session will need to complete a FAFSA for both the previous and current years. You may apply online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

St. Ambrose University Financial Aid: [www.sau.edu/Admissions-and-Aid](http://www.sau.edu/Admissions-and-Aid)

St. Ambrose University Master of Social Work program: [www.sau.edu/msw](http://www.sau.edu/msw)

### **Master of Social Work**

Applications for all MSW assistantships, scholarships, and fellowships will be available on the website listed above.

### **Graduate Assistantships**

The School of Social Work has three Graduate Assistantships (GA) available:

- GA for admissions, GA for research and GA for community organizing. Pay is approximately \$400 per month stipend on a nine month contract for 10 hrs/week. No tuition remission is included. Please consult St. Ambrose University Human Resources for exact pay.

### **Graduate Assistantships at St. Ambrose University**

Additional GA positions are available throughout St. Ambrose University. For more information about these scholarships and the point of contact in each department, please go to [www.sau.edu/employment](http://www.sau.edu/employment).

### **St. Vincent Scholarships**

\$2,500 scholarships available to students with 9 or more credits per semester. (Two available per year)

### **St. Ambrose Graduate Fellowships**

\$2500 scholarships available to students with 9 or more credits per semester. (Two available per year)

### **Empowerment Scholarships**

\$5000 scholarships available to students with 9 or more credits per semester. (2 available per year)

### **University-wide financial aid/student loans**

Applications available through the Financial Aid office and have variable deadlines.

**Graduate Student Government Association (GSGA) Scholarships** GSGA has scholarships available for graduate students attending St. Ambrose University. Contact SAU Financial Aid or [gsga@sau.edu](mailto:gsga@sau.edu) with questions.

## PROGRAMS OF STUDY

Academic courses, including field practicum, provide the knowledge and skills essential for advanced empowerment social work practice in the MSW Program. Teaching is reinforced by the scholarship and research interests of faculty, particularly in the areas of the interaction of the person and environment and the dynamics of change through the empowerment perspective to ensure a just society. Through faculty and student participation in community organizations, task forces, and scholarship, the School, including all programs, meets its responsibilities to the community and to the social work profession to improve quality of life and strengthen society.

The Master of Social Work Program at St. Ambrose University structures its curriculum for multiple cohort groups seeking a Master of Social Work degree: One year MSW (Advanced Standing) on-ground or online, standard two year MSW on-ground only, three year MSW online only, MSW/MPH, MSW/MBA and one bachelor program, the Bachelor of Social Work. The cohort delivery structures have the same standards by level and require both academic course study and practicum experience. All MSW students follow the same sequence of required courses. One year MSW Advanced Standing students join the program in the summer semester before becoming part of the empowerment specialization cohort of students.

***One-year MSW Advanced Standing program (on-ground or online)*** The MSW Program at St. Ambrose University offers an accelerated curriculum option available to highly qualified graduates of BSW programs accredited by the Council of Social Work Education. Consideration for advanced standing is given only to those social work graduates with superior academic standing and exceptional references.

Applicants for advanced standing must meet all the admissions criteria required for standard admission. Applicants for admission to the Advanced Standing program must meet the following admissions criteria:

- a) Demonstrated potential for graduate studies by maintaining a 3.0 or better grade point average for the last 60 credit hours; and
- b) Evidence of interest, ability, and potential for professional social work practice on an advanced level as demonstrated by two letters of recommendation and a written personal statement. Additionally, Advanced Standing applicants must have graduated from an accredited baccalaureate social work program with a B- grade in all required social work courses. When a number of years have passed between an applicant's BSW graduation and their MSW application date, it is expected that the applicant will have been working in a social work field in the interim (to be determined on a case by case basis). Applicants should submit an official transcript of their undergraduate work for review by the Admissions Committee of the MSW Program.

The Program may request a baccalaureate program summary, course syllabi, title and descriptions of courses, and reading lists. Decisions will be made on the basis of comparability of the undergraduate social work courses to relevant areas of foundation curriculum. Students given advanced standing may receive recognition of up to 24 credits toward the MSW. Students accepted for advanced standing must complete specialization requirements as well as those foundation courses that were not exempted. Full-time students admitted to advanced standing ordinarily begin an eight-week

summer session. During this special summer session students will register for 6 credit hours: MSW690: Diversity and Social Policy and MSW720: Social Work Program Evaluation. Advanced standing students who want to complete degree requirements in two years, will complete the core specialization courses and 2 electives in the first year and their field placement, requisite seminar, and up to 2 electives in the second year.

### ***Two-year MSW program (on-ground)***

This program calls for two academic years of study and completion of 60 credit hours. Students ordinarily spend two consecutive days a week on campus taking classroom courses and 912 total field hours over the 2 years in social work agencies or settings gaining social work experience under supervision.

### ***Three year MSW program***

St. Ambrose University has a part-time online program, making it possible for the highly motivated student to obtain the MSW degree on a part-time basis over three years, including summer sessions. Some students find that a four-year schedule is necessary due to personal responsibilities. Students must fulfill all degree requirements within four years from date of initial enrollment. In the three year schedule, students will complete two semesters of 6 credits and four semesters of 9 credits each. The final 12 semester hours are comprised of 4 electives which can be taken in the final year, over summers, or winterim terms. Part-time students complete 60 hours for the MSW degree.

### ***MSW/MBA***

This 3 year dual degree would increase a MSW graduate's ability to function in the workplace with the knowledge necessary to lead an agency to deliver quality services. This MSW MBA articulates an intentional path for social workers with administrative aspirations. Essentially, the curriculum entails one year of MSW coursework, one year of MBA coursework, and then the final year of MSW coursework. Students meet the degree requirements for both degrees, with a few course substitutions. Students should consult their advisor for degree pathway.

### ***MSW/MPH***

This dual master's degree program incorporates competencies of public health and social work education and practice to provide an epidemiologic/populations-based approach to preventing, addressing, and solving social health problems. This dual degree trains students in population-based prevention and multi-level intervention. Additionally, students gain practical experience in inter-professional practice, cultural competency, social justice, empowerment, leadership and management, research and evaluation, and policy development.

Dual degrees articulate an intentional path for social workers wanting to explore the practice of public health. Together, these two degrees elevate social work's strengths in cultural and community responsiveness, empowerment, inter-professional teamwork, and care coordination through public health's strategic and epidemiological approach to caring for the underserved and most vulnerable.

***MSW Courses Offered: (not all Electives are offered every semester)***

Required:

MSW 510	Generalist Practice I (3)	MSW 520	Generalist Practice II (3)
MSW 610	Human Behavior Theories (3)	MSW 620	Diversity/Social Systems(3)
MSW 710	SW Research Design (3)	MSW 720	SW Program Evaluation (3)
MSW 810	Social Welfare Policy (3)	MSW 820	Social Policy Analysis (3)
MSW 591	Field Instruction & Seminar I (3)	MSW 592	Field Instruct & Sem II (3)
MSW 530	Empowerment Practice I (3)	MSW 540	Emp. Practice II (3)
MSW 593	Field Instruction III (4)	MSW 593	Field Instruction IV (4)
MSW 603	Field Sem III: SW Ethics (2)	MSW 604	Field Sem IV: Ethical Dec (2)

Electives (choose 4 usually in specialization curriculum):

MSW 550	Empowerment Social Work in Mental Health (3)
MSW 560	Empowerment Social Work in Child Welfare (3)
MSW 570	Couple and Family Therapy (3)
MSW 580	Empowerment Social Work in Aging(3)
MSW 590	Introduction to Social Work with Military Service Members, Veterans, & Their Families (3)
MSW 830	Supervision (3)
MSW 850	Empowerment Social Work in School Settings(3)
MSW 860	Economic and Social Justice (3)
MSW 870	Management in Human Services (3)
MSW910	Mental Health Policies and Practices in India and the US(3)
MSW 920	Empowerment SW in Substance Using Disorders (3)
MSW 930	International SW and Social Welfare(3)
MSW 940	Feminist Social Work (3)
MSW 950	Empowerment Social Work in Health Care(3)
MSW970	Spirituality in Social Work (3)
MSW980	Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice (3)

## **MSW PROGRAM ADVISING**

All full-time social work faculty members except the MSW Director, act as formal educational advisors in order to acquaint the student with the general curriculum, to assist students in the selection of specific courses, and to offer feedback regarding students' performance and development. Advisors are available to students for consultation on a regular basis and are fully knowledgeable about the MSW Program, Mission and Purposes.

All students are assigned MSW faculty academic advisors upon acceptance to the program. Although students have advisors assigned, they are free to seek out any faculty member to discuss academic and professional development matters. The assigned academic advisor maintains responsibility for giving or seeking official approval related to a student's academic decisions. Faculty advisors are available to students for general orientation to the MSW Program and its curriculum and the University at large.

Advisors may meet with students to discuss issues of concern, academic performance, professional development, and course selection. In the case of formal remediation, academic advisors will assist the student with the creation of and adherence to a plan of action. Advisors also refer students who have special circumstances, such as learning disabilities, writing issues, personal difficulties, and/or financial needs to the appropriate department at the University. In the case of an academic review, academic advisors are called upon to oversee compliance with the recommendations of the review committee.

Further information for students seeking support, including the Accessibility Resource Center, the Student Counseling Center, Graduate Writing Coordinator, and Student Health Services is found on the St. Ambrose University website and the University Student Handbook.

### **Accessibility Resource Center**

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Accessibility Resource Center (ARC) at 563-333-6275 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.  
<http://www.sau.edu/ARC>

### **Integration of Cross-Cultural Content**

Social work courses focus attention on various ethnic groups and oppressed populations, particularly those disadvantaged by classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, and regionalism in American society. We will discuss how these groups are differentially affected by policy, practices, and services within various settings.

## **POLICIES REGARDING ACADEMIC MATTERS**

As a student at St. Ambrose University, students are subject to the academic and conduct procedures of the university community as described in the St. Ambrose University Student Handbook. As an MSW student, students are also subject to the procedures, policies, and expectations of the MSW Program and the Social Work Profession.

The St. Ambrose University Master of Social Work Program prepares students for professional social work practice. An MSW degree is an indicator to the public and to the professional social work community that the person to whom it was awarded has demonstrated fitness to provide advanced professional social work services. An MSW professional is expected to effectively use a broad knowledge and skills base, adhere to a professional code of ethics, practice a philosophy of social and economic justice, and demonstrate appreciation for human resiliency and the strengths of diverse cultures.

### **NASW Code of Ethics**

All students are expected to conduct themselves within a standard of professional conduct. All faculty, staff, and students in the School of Social Work are expected to comply with the NASW Code of Ethics. A copy is available through the School of Social Work office. All students are provided with a copy as a part of field education. It is also available through the NASW website and distributed at the Fall Field orientation.

### **Grades in Academic Courses**

To meet the specific needs of graduate professional education, grading scales used in the MSW Program vary from the university standard as listed in the St. Ambrose University Course Catalog. Grades in academic courses are granted based on criteria included in the syllabus for each course. Letter grades include A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, and F. To successfully complete the program without academic warning, probation, or dismissal, a student must maintain a "B" average (3.0 GPA). For the purposes of determining grade point averages, numerical equivalents of these letter grades are as follows:

A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
F	0

In special circumstances, a student may initiate a request for the grade of “I” (Incomplete). The “I” grade is granted at the discretion of the course instructor only when illness or other compelling reasons prevent completion of the required course work. Students are required to submit a plan of completion to the course instructor with deadlines of when coursework will be completed. The plan of completion is reviewed and approved by the course instructor. The academic advisor is notified of the Incomplete Grade and plan of completion by the course instructor. Students must successfully complete the necessary course work within the time frame negotiated with the instructor and prior to registering for any subsequent course for which the incomplete course is a pre-requisite. If the coursework is not completed within that timeframe, a grade of “F” is automatically assigned to the course and the student must complete the entire course at a later time.

\*\*Note that Academic Review procedures are triggered when two or more Incomplete grades are received by a student. See the Policies on Academic Criteria for Retention, Review, and Sanction of MSW Students in this volume for clarification.

### **Grades in Field Instruction**

Grades in Field Instruction are earned by successful completion of course requirements. These include completion of the required field hours and contracted learning goals, completion and timely submission of required field documents, and the evaluation by the Agency Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison. These culminate with a grade recommendation to the Director of Field Education, who assigns the final grade.

### **Withdrawal from Courses**

The MSW Program follows university guidelines for student withdrawal from classes as described in the University Course Catalog.

### **Class Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes. Excessive lateness and/or absences may affect course grades. Instructors will give notice of their classroom attendance and participation policies in the course syllabus.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity refers to behaviors and attitudes that honor the purposes and conditions of academic assignments and exercises. Academic honesty requires that the work submitted in response to a course assignment, whether in class or in field, represents the original and accurate work of the student or group who has taken responsibility for it. It also requires that work submitted is new work produced for the particular course and assignment to which it responds. Finally, it requires that where using the words, ideas, or findings of others in the assignment, proper credit be given to the original source of the material using appropriate APA Format. Lifting sentences from the works of others without citation or quotation marks is plagiarism that will be dealt with accordingly. The School of Social Work will handle breaches of academic honesty following St. Ambrose University’s policies and procedures (see St. Ambrose University Student Handbook.) Serious or repeated breaches of academic honesty will likely result in course failure or dismissal from the program.

### **Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

Electronic devices should be used to support the learning activities in the classroom. These include such activities as taking notes and accessing course readings under discussion. However, non-academic use of laptops and other devices are distracting and seriously disrupt the learning process for everyone. Laptops or other electronic devices are not to be used in the classroom for non-academic reasons. This includes emailing, texting, social networking, and use of the Internet. In the case of an emergency, students should step out of the room to take the call. Failure to meet these expectations may result in a loss of participation points or to be asked to leave class.

### **Policy for Independent Studies**

Independent studies are elective courses designed to increase a student's depth of knowledge of a particular subject area or broaden knowledge in a new subject. Students may choose to take an independent study for 1, 2, or 3 credit hours in any empowerment specialization semester. Students cannot fulfill the non-elective requirements of the degree through independent study; nor can they receive independent study credit in any course for which they have received - or will receive - academic credit from another graduate or undergraduate program. Consistent with CSWE requirements, independent studies will not be approved to grant students academic credit for their life experiences. No more than 5 credit hours of independent study may be applied toward the MSW degree.

Each hour of credit granted for an independent study should reflect at least 50 hours of actual time expended on the study. Independent studies that are experiential in nature must also include a significant academic component.

### ***Setting up an independent study***

Students wishing to set up an independent study must develop a written proposal that includes:

- (1) a statement of the specific topic of the study;
- (2) a set of measurable objectives delineating learning outcomes;
- (3) a brief literature review of the topic;
- (4) a plan (with timeline) for meeting the objectives;
- (5) a preliminary description of the reading they will do and the product(s) they will produce to document the achievement of the objectives; and
- (6) a statement of how many credit hours they are seeking. Prior to developing the proposal, students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with one or

more faculty members. Students may consult any faculty member for advice on the project and on selecting a professor to supervise their independent study.

While developing a proposal, students should consult closely with the faculty member with whom they would like to collaborate on the study. Students should choose a faculty member whose interests and expertise most closely match the chosen subject matter.

After review and approval of the proposal by the consulting faculty member, the student then submits a copy of the proposal to the MSW Program's Curriculum Committee. Students should submit the proposal *at least one month, and preferably two months prior to registration for the semester in which they wish to take the independent study* to allow adequate time for faculty review and student revision of the plan of study. If the Curriculum Committee determines that revisions of the proposal are necessary, *the student must complete these revisions and receive approval of the final proposal by both the supervising instructor and the MSW Curriculum Committee at least two weeks prior to scheduled course registration.*

When a proposal has been approved by the Curriculum Committee, and *prior to scheduled course registration*, the student and consulting faculty member will develop a learning contract. If a third party such as an agency field instructor will also be involved in the student's learning, then this third person should also be a party to the contract.

A contract incorporates many elements of the student's original independent study proposal including:

- (1) a descriptive title for the study
- (2) a brief description of the topic and scope of the study
- (3) a timeline for completion of the study
- (4) a list of readings that will be completed (the list of reading need not be exhaustive to allow for flexibility in choosing readings that will actually be done as the independent study progresses)
- (5) a description of and grading criteria for the products (exam, presentation, paper, etc.) that will demonstrate accomplishment of the learning objectives
- (6) any special criteria agreed upon by the student, instructor, and others; and
- (7) a schedule of meetings with the instructor and others.

If a student fails to meet the deadlines for submitting a final proposal or developing the learning contract, the program reserves the right to deny permission for or delay the independent study until a subsequent semester. Students are expected to complete the independent study in the agreed-upon time frame. At the discretion of the instructor, a grade of "Incomplete" may be granted if the work is not completed within the contracted time period, provided that the instructor is satisfied that at least 2/3 of the work has been completed.

## **POLICIES ON ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL CRITERIA FOR RETENTION, REVIEW, AND SANCTION OF MSW STUDENTS**

The Master of Social Work degree is both a scholarly and professional degree. Admission to the program is granted to students who have demonstrated potential to complete high quality academic work beyond the baccalaureate degree. Retention in the program requires students to achieve academic goals and maintain professional standards.

Professional actions and decisions of social workers impact the lives of vulnerable persons and persons in precarious life situations. More than simply applying the knowledge, skills, and values of the social work profession, social workers must also demonstrate qualities of emotional stability, self-control, reliability, good judgment, empathy, collegiality, genuineness, and integrity. Social work is a demanding profession that has potential to do harm as well as good to vulnerable people. In response, the St. Ambrose MSW Program holds students accountable to both academic and professional standards.

Course and field instruction grades reflect class participation (including attendance), oral and written communication skills, and mastery of the knowledge, skills, and values of social work. Students are expected to demonstrate professional attitudes and skills congruent with the social work profession including self-awareness, ethics in action, respect for human dignity, and a commitment to social justice. Failure to meet course expectations or professional standards set by the MSW Program and the Social Work Profession constitutes academic failure and may result in a student's dismissal from the MSW Program.

### **Student Role and Responsibilities**

Students bear primary responsibility for monitoring their own achievement and behavior to ensure they are making satisfactory progress. Students should ascertain instructors' classroom policies and grading criteria (e.g. policies on attendance, late assignments). Students are also responsible to learn and follow MSW Program and University policies, field agency policies within the Field Instruction setting, and the NASW Code of Ethics.

All students should seek clarification and feedback from their instructors as necessary. Students who sense they are in academic or professional jeopardy should initiate meetings with their instructors, faculty field liaisons, and/or academic advisors to discuss their situations. Students are encouraged to address academic and professional problems early to maximize opportunities for corrective action and seek University support services and resources as appropriate.

### **Academic and Professional Standards for Retention**

To remain in good standing in the MSW Program, students are expected to make consistent progress toward graduation.

Performance indicators that students are making satisfactory progress include:

1. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 point scale).
2. Grades of C or above in each course (only courses with a grade of C or above count toward the degree).
3. Successful completion of courses in sequence (indicators of less than satisfactory progress include course withdrawal or receiving a grade of “incomplete”).
4. Continued satisfactory progress in Field Instruction. Behavior consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics in classroom, community, and Field Instruction.

Examples of ***appropriate*** behaviors include but are not limited to:

- a. basing professional practice on the social work values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence
- b. developing constructive professional relationships with clients and others
- c. avoiding dual relationships and conflicts of interest with agencies and clients
- d. working constructively and cooperatively with supervisors, peers, instructors and other professionals
- e. complying with field agency policies and MSW program standards and procedures
- f. maintaining client, agency, and classroom confidentiality
- g. disclosing any dual relationships, conflicts of interest, legal issues, or criminal justice issues that may affect their performance or admissibility to a particular field setting
- h. applying established social work methods and skills as well as research and theories of human behavior to social work situations

### **Academic Criteria for Automatic Non-Retention in the MSW Program**

Some situations will result in automatic non-retention (dismissal) in the MSW Program. No Academic Review is necessary. These circumstances are:

1. For students admitted to the program with provisional status
  - a. failure to achieve a 3.0 GPA in the first 12 credit hours completed
2. For all students
  - a. grades of “F” in any 2 courses during the program of study
  - b. one grade of “F” and two grades of “C” in any 3 courses during the program

of study

3. For students previously reviewed in an Academic Review
  - a. failure to meet the conditions for retention set at the previous review
  - b. compliance review timelines, procedures, and personnel involved will be specified in the academic review report
4. For students placed on academic probation because their GPA fell below 3.0
  - a. failure to achieve a cumulative GPA of 3.0 by the end of the probationary semester or to maintain a GPA of at least 3.0 the semester following the probationary semester

Other situations may also lead to a student's dismissal from the program. Such situations will be considered individually in an Academic Review.

### **Review and Monitoring Procedures**

The MSW Program monitors each student's progress using procedures implemented by course instructors, agency field instructors, faculty field liaisons, academic advisors, and administrative personnel. At midterm and the end of each semester, faculty members will review all students' grades and progress in field to determine if any students are falling short of academic standards for retention. The steps listed below will be followed in the event of academic and/or behavioral concerns to ensure appropriate notification, necessary identification, and provide support during remediation.

### **Notification of Concern(s)**

Any instructor who identifies a student at risk of having academic and/or professional difficulties will inform the student and conduct a face-to-face meeting with the student. First incident of concern will be addressed between the instructor and the student. If concern(s) continue, the instructor will then move to the Remediation process starting at Formal Notification of Concern(s). If difficulties arise in the Field Instruction setting, the field instructor will notify both the student and the faculty field liaison, who will in turn consult the Director of Field Education.

### **Circumstances that Justify Processes for Remediation**

Certain performance indicators may signal the need for intervention by those persons directly involved in the situation (e.g. classroom instructor/student, agency field instructor/student) without initiating an Academic Review.

Examples of such circumstances include:

1. Poor academic performance (e.g. the student is not maintaining a 3.0 grade during the semester or the class or the student receives a C or below in the course).
2. Two or more grades of "Incomplete".
3. Disrespectful, antagonistic, or distracting behavior in the classroom.
4. Breaches of social work ethics or policies.

5. Instances of academic dishonesty.
6. Absences, tardiness, lack of class participation, or late coursework.
7. Violation of classroom policies (e.g. misuse of electronic devices).
8. Marginal or unsatisfactory performance in Field Education, including the field placement planning process.
9. Breaches of behavioral standards for professional social work practice.
10. Concerns about a lack of fit between the student and the MSW Program or the social work profession
11. Other circumstances in which faculty members or other persons involved recognize the need for intervention to ensure student success

## **Steps of Remediation**

### **Formal Notification of Concern(s)**

- Faculty and/or adjunct faculty notifies student of academic, profession, and/or behavioral concerns (as referenced above) with the Academic Advisor included in email to be aware of situation
- A face-to-face meeting will be held with concerned faculty and student
- Faculty meets with student to discuss concerns and share specific expectations moving forward
- Review of concern(s) with a connection to Social Work ethics and profession
- Student's perspective and experience will be heard
- Identification of resources and supports to help student be successful moving forward
- A follow up email will be sent by the faculty to the student and academic advisor summarizing steps moving forward
- If concern(s) is not remedied moving forward, the next step would be formal meeting with academic advisor for formal remediation

### **Formal Remediation**

- Formal Remediation will occur if:
  - Concern(s) not addressed and/or progress is not made after Formal Notification or Concern(s) OR
  - Academic Advisor identifies a pattern of behavior in other courses
- A face-to-face meeting will be held with concerned faculty, academic advisor, and student
  - Student can bring a support person if needed, for example ARC representative
  - If the concerned faculty serves dual roles, an additional faculty member will be included for additional support

- Documentation of concern(s) provided to student and Academic Advisor prior to the face-to-face meeting
- Review of concern(s) with a connection to Social Work ethics and profession
- Identification of support needed for the student to address the concern
- Student's perspective and experience will be heard
- In collaboration with the student, an Improvement Plan will be created to address the identified concern(s). The Improvement Plan will specify the concern(s), concrete steps necessary for resolution, timeframe, supports available and needed, and criteria for evaluation of success.
- A follow up email will be sent by the faculty to the student and academic advisor including the agreed upon Improvement Plan
- If the student fails to remediate the concern(s) as defined in the Improvement Plan, the faculty member or student's academic advisor will notify the MSW Director of the need for an Academic Review.

### **Academic Review**

When serious concerns arise about a student's academic performance or compliance with Program or professional standards, the MSW Director will convene the faculty to conduct an Academic Review. Such concerns may arise from the ongoing monitoring of student achievement as described above or may result from a precipitating incident at any time during the student's course of study. An Academic Review is a decision-making process of the faculty regarding the status of students whose academic or professional success is in jeopardy. Potential outcomes of an Academic Review range from developing a plan of correction to dismissing the student from the MSW program.

Circumstances that warrant an Academic Review include the following:

1. A cumulative GPA of below 3.0.
2. An unsatisfactory evaluation in Field Instruction (such as receiving a No- Credit/Fail grade thereby failing to meet the pre-requisite for the next semester of Field Experience).
3. In the event of a Field Termination.
4. Failure to meet behavioral standards for professional social work (as described in the NASW Code of Ethics); violations that have not been remedied through informal means or that pose an immediate threat to individuals or organizations.
5. Failure to remedy academic difficulties that were previously addressed through remediation processes.
6. Substantial incongruities between the student's values and attitudes and the value base of the social work profession as articulated by the NASW Code of Ethics.

7. Failure to meet automatic academic standards for retention when any faculty member believes there are extenuating circumstances that warrant review.
8. Gross violations of the University academic integrity policy (as outlined in the University student handbook).
9. Other serious concerns about a student's academic performance or compliance with MSW Program or social work professional standards

Faculty processes to monitor student performance will determine the need for an Academic Review. To initiate an Academic Review process, the MSW Director will notify the student in writing at least 5 business days prior to the scheduled Review. The letter of notification will state:

1. specific issues of concern and attempts at remediation
2. the student's right to present their experience and/or information to the faculty orally or in writing
3. the date, place, and time of the meeting
4. a copy of this policy will accompany the notification.

The Academic Review Panel consists of all available full-time faculty members (excluding the MSW Director). The MSW Director will appoint a faculty member to be the Chair of the Academic Review Panel. Once a student is notified of the Academic Review, all communication regarding the Academic Review must be with the Chair of the Academic Review Panel. This Panel Chair will:

1. will develop an agenda for the meeting and share with all parties in advance of the meeting
2. access input from individual faculty members, agency field instructors, the student and/or others
3. seek any relevant information that may be useful in reaching a decision
4. provide submitted documentation to all parties at least 2 business days (48 hours) ahead of the scheduled Academic Review meeting

Students under review may choose a support person(s) who they believe may be helpful in the process to accompany them to the review meeting. If bringing a support person to the Review, it is the student's responsibility to alert the Chair and describe what information this person will be offering and what role this person will play in the review process. Students will receive copies of all information gathered for consideration by Panel members prior to the Review.

After all perspectives are heard during the Academic Review Meeting, Panel Members will in closed session decide on a course of action. The Chair of the Review Panel will send a written report of the Panel's decision to the student within 5 business days. [See Resolutions and Sanctions for possible courses of action.] Within 5 business days of the date of the email, the student may submit a written request for an appeal of the decision to the MSW Director. If the student does not appeal the decision, the MSW Director will formally accept the Panel's decision and convey this to the student.

If the student appeals the decision of the Academic Review Panel, the MSW Director will hear the appeal within 5 business days of receiving the request. The MSW Director

may either uphold the decision or, after additional consultation with the faculty, arrive at an alternative decision. The MSW Director's decision regarding the student's appeal will be conveyed to the student within 5 business days of the appeal hearing and will be immediately implemented.

If the student appeals the decision of the MSW Director, the School of Social Work Director will hear the appeal within 5 business days of receiving the request. The School of Social Work Director may either uphold the decision or, after additional consultation with the faculty, arrive at an alternative decision. The School of Social Work Director's decision regarding the student's appeal will be conveyed to the student within 5 business days of the appeal hearing and will be immediately implemented. Any further appeal by the student must be made beyond the School of Social Work to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services, according to University policies.

### **Resolutions and Sanctions**

In a Review process, the faculty can determine any reasonable course of action that fits the unique circumstances of the situation at hand. This course of action may include, but is not limited to, the following resolutions and sanctions:

1. Withdrawal from one or more courses and/or access to remedial services.
2. Immediate removal from Field Instruction and co-requisite courses.
3. Academic probation for a semester during which the student's performance will be closely monitored followed by an Academic Review at the end of the semester.
4. Completion of current courses without the option of continuing in the program the following semester.
5. Required withdrawal from all courses in the current semester with re-evaluation for admission in a subsequent semester.
6. Immediate dismissal from the program.
7. Any combination of the options above with a requirement that the student be reevaluated for reinstatement or re-admission at a later date. In this circumstance, the Panel may require the student to provide evidence and specific documentation that they have resolved critical concerns or that the precipitating circumstances have changed materially.
8. Modification of a student's Plan of Study to ensure student achievement of MSW educational outcomes.

## **ADDRESSING CONCERNS IN THE FIELD PLACEMENT**

All field placements are made for the entire academic year. Students with a field placement secured are expected to fulfill the agreement made with the field agency. Agency Field Instructors likewise agree to provide a learning environment for the student for the entire academic year. In the event there are concerns with the student or the field placement, it is best to have the necessary parties involved in addressing and planning for remediation. The Agency Field Instructor should inform the student and Faculty Field Liaison of any student performance concerns and/or behaviors that cause the Agency Field Instructor to question the student's appropriate professional development. It is critical to address concerns as soon as possible. The School of Social Work is focused on and committed to addressing any concerns in a way that supports the student and the field agency while adhering to agency policy, university policy, and the Social Work Code of Ethics.

Below are the steps to address concerns:

1. Face-to-face meeting between the student and Agency Field Instructor to discuss the situation.
2. If the situation is not resolved, the student and/or Agency Field Instructor contacts the Faculty Field Liaison.
3. A face-to-face meeting will be held with the student, Agency Field Instructor, and Faculty Field Liaison to address the situation and develop a remediation plan with a mutually agreeable result to maintain the placement. The Faculty Field Liaison will document the meeting, including the identified concern(s), and the proposed remediation plan. This document will be emailed to the Director of Field Education, student, and Agency Field Instructor.
4. The Director of Field Education will notify the student's Academic Advisor and provide the remediation plan. The Academic Advisor will meet face-to-face with the student to provide additional support.
5. If the remediation plan does not address the situation, the Director or Field Education is notified.
6. The Director of Field Education will hold a face-to-face meeting with the student, Faculty Field Liaison, and Agency Field Instructor to discuss the ability of the student and agency to work together for the remainder of the placement and determine the likelihood that the placement can have a successful outcome. The student's academic advisor will be notified and updated on the situation.

## **TERMINATION OF FIELD EXPERIENCE**

When remediation has been unsuccessful, the student, Agency Field Instructor, and/or the Faculty Field Liaison can initiate field placement termination by submitting a letter to the Director of Field Education. The field placement termination letter must include the reason(s) for termination, summary of the events, and attempts at remediation. In addition, the Field Agency and the MSW Program have the discretion to immediately remove a student from the agency setting if either believes such removal is warranted. Situations where removal will be considered warranted include but are not limited to the following:

1. The level of performance in the field placement is determined to be far below the standards expected of an MSW student and the student is unable to remedy deficiencies. This includes lacking knowledge and skills for effective social work practice, poor interpersonal communication and relationship skills, inappropriate presentation of self, and showing a lack of commitment to investing in the field placement learning opportunities. The Agency Field Instructor and Faculty Field Liaison attempted to remedy performance concerns, but efforts were unsuccessful in bringing the student up to the 'Satisfactory' level for the given semester and its Competency standards. This will constitute grounds for an Academic Review to determine the student's fit and/or continuation in the MSW program.
2. Serious or repeated violations of the agency's policies and procedures.
3. Failure to disclose previous and/or new critical background information in application forms, pre-placement forms, or during the interview process.
4. Exhibiting behaviors and attitudes that are inconsistent or at odds with the values of the social work profession.
5. Violation of professional ethics and standards for ethical practice.
6. Unexcused and prolonged absences from the field placement.
7. Attempts to harm oneself or others.
8. Any sexual relationship with an agency client.
9. Reporting to the practicum site under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

The Director of Field Education will notify the student of the field placement termination and provide the field placement termination letter. The MSW Director, Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and the student's Academic Advisor will be included in the email notification of the field placement termination. An exit meeting will occur as soon as possible with student, Agency Field Instructor, Faculty Field Liaison, and the Director of Field Education. The Director of Field Education will ensure the termination from the field agency is conducted in a professional manner. All agency materials, keys, or other equipment provided to the student will be returned immediately to the field agency. Partial credit for the time spent in the field placement will not be granted. The School of Social Work policies require students who drop Field Instruction to also withdraw from concurrent seminar courses.

Following the field placement termination, the MSW Director will convene the faculty to conduct an Academic Review to determine the student's standing in the MSW program. (See the *St. Ambrose University School of Social Work Graduate Student Manual*). Students are not guaranteed that an appropriate alternative placement may be secured. In cases where an appropriate re-placement cannot be made, as determined by the Director of Field Education, the student may need to drop Field Instruction and co-requisite courses for the remainder of the academic year.

**All other policies related to Field Education can be found in the Field Education Manual.**

## **ETHICAL CONDUCT IN THE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT**

Within its Student Handbook, St. Ambrose University offers a code of conduct as a framework “for an academic society in which students, faculty and staff can realize their potential. It protects the rights of the St. Ambrose community to learn, teach and do research. It preserves the right of free expression, peaceful assembly and orderly protest, yet it also recognizes the need for normal university activities to continue undisturbed.” Any student who violates this code or any specific regulation adopted by the university is liable to disciplinary action according to university procedures outlined in the St. Ambrose University Student Handbook. Students are expected to familiarize themselves with this code of conduct and all university regulations, policies, and procedures regarding behavior within the university community.

### **Human Rights Policy**

The School of Social Work is committed to the highest standard of conduct in human interaction. Founded on the fundamental belief that all individuals should be treated with dignity and respect in all situations and interactions, the School of Social Work recognizes the right of just treatment for all persons regardless of race, gender identity, ethnicity, country of origin, sexual orientation, age, religious beliefs, physical or cognitive abilities, and social or economic class.

Professional behavior by social workers is defined by the NASW Code of Ethics. Students, faculty, and staff within the social work program are expected to act in ways consistent with this code throughout their association with the program both in and out of the classroom context. Behavior in keeping with this code goes beyond simple compliance but extends to a duty to speak out against discrimination, oppression, and injustice in its many forms.

St. Ambrose University creates a policy context for the respectful interaction within the School of Social Work. The University articulates its policy statements contained within its Student Handbook. Students are expected to review these policies carefully to ensure that their behavior is in compliance with university requirements for respectful and ethical behavior.

### **Harassment and Discrimination**

The St. Ambrose University Student Handbook explicitly states that “its students, faculty, and staff have a right to be free from sex discrimination in the form of sexual harassment by any member of the academic community.” The School of Social Work reaffirms this principle and expects all program constituents to treat one another with dignity and respect. The Student Handbook offers specific definitions of behavior defined as sexual harassment and offers a process for students to complain if they feel they are victims of sexual harassment.

### **Student-Faculty Relationships**

The student-faculty relationship is at the core of social work education. Faculty members have important roles in teaching, mentoring, and advising students in preparation for professional practice. Students have important roles in learning and asserting their professional development needs. Both faculty members and students are

expected to be aware that faculty positions in respect to students carry considerable power and authority. In respect to this faculty-student power differential, the issue of how faculty members and students relate both inside and outside of the academic context requires careful consideration, reflection, and professional integrity.

Consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics, social work faculty and students should not engage in dual relationships that have the potential to exploit or do potential harm to students. Specifically, faculty members should not see students as clients and students should not seek to be clients of faculty members. Faculty members and students should not have financial transactions with one another. And, faculty members and students should also not have sexual relationships. In all student-faculty relationships, both parties should recognize the power differential and avoid redefining the relationship away from its primary educational purpose.

The University policy on sexual harassment also applies to faculty/student relationships in the School of Social Work. In fact, as stated in this policy, sexual harassment of a student by a faculty member is seen as especially serious given the fundamentally asymmetric nature of the relationship. Students who experience sexual harassment by a faculty member may obtain redress through established university procedures.

### **Confidentiality**

Faculty and staff within the MSW Program work to maintain student confidentiality to the extent possible. To meet the educational needs of students, the MSW Program will exchange relevant information within its collegial system including classroom instructors, field instructors, field liaisons, program administrators, and program staff and others within the university community in keeping with university policy and procedures. Students do have the right to request that a faculty member or other program personnel maintain confidentiality about specific information to the extent that the person can do so in compliance with state and federal laws and university policy. However, even confidential information will be shared among program personnel for compelling educational reasons.

The integration of classroom learning and professional practice requires a free and open exchange of information about field and work experiences in the classroom setting. Students should work to protect the confidentiality of the client and agency situations about which they are talking. Students should also maintain the boundary of the classroom by refraining from divulging confidential classroom-generated information outside of the classroom setting. As an exception, faculty members maintain their “mandatory reporting” and “duty to warn” responsibilities.

### **Environmental Consciousness**

An elevated consciousness about the impact of social and physical environments on human development and behavior is a defining characteristic of the social work profession. As such students, faculty, and staff within the program are expected to demonstrate behaviors consistent with a heightened environmental awareness. Behaviors that demonstrate environmental responsibility include the judicious use of program resources and respectful treatment of university property and equipment. The university provides easy access to containers for the recycling of paper and cardboard in clearly marked bins and for the recycling of plastic and glass beverage containers near

vending machines. Students should survey the classroom and office areas to locate recycling bins and use them to dispose of recyclables. Students should also be aware of their impact on air quality within classroom buildings and limit their smoking to designated areas as well as monitor their use of fragrances and other products toward which other program constituents may have sensitivities.

### **Alcohol Policy**

Student consumption of alcohol is subject to state law and university regulations. Fundamentally, no individual under the age of 21 may purchase or consume alcoholic beverages. Any student-sponsored event on campus at which alcohol will be served requires prior approval, participation by program sponsors in a university run alcohol training program, and on-site supervision. The university handbook offers specific guidelines and procedures for students regarding the distribution and consumption of alcohol in relationship to the university and its activities.

### **St. Ambrose University Student Handbook**

This can be found on the SAU website and the portal.

## **STUDENTS' RIGHTS IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

### **School of Social Work Statement of Student Rights**

The St. Ambrose University School of Social Work has developed and approved the following statement of student rights:

1. The right to have representation and participation on standing committees of the School.
2. The right to petition through proper channels for changes in curriculum, field experience, and grades; and to petition through established channels in the case of grievance.
3. The right of students who are participating in research or writing for publication under faculty direction as a part of their formal academic program to receive appropriate recognition for their contribution to the process.
4. The right of students to organize within their own interests.
5. The right of students to recognize student organizations to invite and hear speakers of their choice on subjects of their choice.
6. The right of students, individually or collectively, to engage at will in off campus activities, thus exercising their rights as a citizen of the community, state and nation. Students shall not claim to formally represent the School of Social Work or St. Ambrose University unless authorization has been attained.
7. The right to ethical relationships and interactions with all School of Social Work constituents in a manner consistent with the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers.
8. The right of equal access to social work resources without regard to race, color, sexual orientation, national origin, religious creed, or political beliefs.

### **Nondiscrimination**

The policy of St. Ambrose University is to provide equal opportunity in all terms and conditions of employment and education for all students.

The University is a non-profit educational institution which admits academically qualified students of any race, color, age, sex, religion or national origin without regard to any physical handicap, and extends all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally available to students at the University. It does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, veteran status, or disability, in the administration of any of its educational policies or programs including admissions, financial aid, and athletics. It also is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer. St. Ambrose University is authorized under federal law to enroll non-immigrant alien students.

The School of Social Work at St. Ambrose University admits academically qualified students of any race, color, age, sex, religion, political orientation, sexual orientation, or national origin without regard to any physical handicap, and extends all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally available to students at the University. The School does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status, veteran status, political orientation, sexual orientation, or disability in the administration of any of its educational policies or programs including admissions and financial aid. It also is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

### **Governance**

The School of Social Work has implemented a governance structure for collaboration among the School of Social Work Director, MSW Program Director, faculty, students, and other program constituents in setting program goals, implementing program objectives, evaluating program impact and recommending program changes.

Committee recommendations regarding policies and procedures are forwarded to the program faculty as a whole for discussion and approval. Two students chosen by MSW SGA, may serve on each of the following standing committees: Policy, Curriculum, and Field Advisory Board. The facilitator of MSW SGA serves on the Program Advisory Committee. The faculty, in consideration of the committee's function, will determine student membership on ad hoc committees.

### **Student Evaluation of the Social Work Program**

Student experience and feedback is a critical component in the continuing development of the program and curriculum. Students in all courses offered by the School of Social Work complete course evaluations on completion of the course competencies. These course competencies evaluate the extent to which the course met the program goals for practice behavior skill development. On an annual basis, students also evaluate all aspects of Field Education. Social work faculty value student feedback and will make modifications as indicated. Students' comments on written mid-semester and end of semester evaluations are reviewed each semester. Particular attention is paid to students' reactions to texts, teaching methods and assignments. Based on faculty review of these evaluations, recommendations may be made relative to mission, goals, objectives and curriculum design. Program outcomes are regularly reviewed as well.

### **Complaint Procedures**

St. Ambrose University has grievance procedures which may be used by social work students. Sexual harassment grievances follow the standard procedures of St. Ambrose University. These procedures can be found in the St. Ambrose Student Handbook.

General grievance procedures follow a similar process and are facilitated by the Director of Human Resources for St. Ambrose University.

Students are encouraged to work with faculty about complaints on grading, faculty or other student conduct, or student development. Any issue which cannot be resolved can be referred to the Director of the MSW Program by either the faculty or student. If the student is dissatisfied with the committee's decision, they may appeal to the Director or the Dean of the College of Health and Human Services.

## **Study Time and Books**

Courses at the School of Social Work require significant study time and individual preparation outside of class. Students should assume that for each hour of class time two or three hours of outside of class will be spent reading, studying, and preparing for assignments. Thus, for full time students enrolled in 12 credit hours of classroom courses, a minimum of 30-40 hours of time must be available on average each week for class and class preparation plus 16 hours for field instruction. First year part time students enrolled in 6 credit hours of classroom courses will likewise require a minimum of 15-20 hours a week on average for both class and out of classroom preparation. Second and third year part-time students will also require a minimum of 15-20 hours a week for class and out of classroom preparation in addition to sixteen field hours a week.

Most required reading for courses is on the Blackboard site for the course. Required and recommended texts may also be purchased at the University Bookstore. As textbook prices have increased significantly in recent years, students should plan on spending at least \$100 per course for texts.

## **Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity refers to behaviors and attitudes that honor the purposes and conditions of academic assignments and exercises. Academic honesty requires that the work submitted in response to a course assignment represents the original work of the student or group who has taken responsibility for it. It also requires that work submitted is new work produced for the particular course and assignment to which it responds. Finally, it requires that where using the words, ideas, or findings of others in the assignment, proper credit be given to the original source of the material. The School of Social Work will handle breaches of academic integrity following Academic Review policies in this handbook. St. Ambrose University's policies and procedures are also noted in the Student Handbook if not resolved within the department.

## **Theta Sigma**

The St. Ambrose University School of Social Work has a chapter affiliation with the Phi Alpha National social work honor society. The Theta Sigma Chapter at St. Ambrose University recognizes scholastic achievement among students and faculty in the graduate social work program at St. Ambrose University. The Theta Sigma Chapter encourages continued study and research at the post-graduate level; recognizes professional social workers whose service, contributions, and leadership are exemplary; and furthers the empowerment goals of social work. Invitation into the Honor Society will be based on a grade point average in the top 10% of the class toward the MSW degree.

## **Personal Safety and Security**

The Department of Security serves members of the university community by providing protection, service and education. Information about personal security education programs, campus law enforcement, and incident reporting is in the *St. Ambrose University Student Handbook*.

The School of Social Work attempts to make students aware of safety issues and to be

prepared to handle potentially dangerous situations. The Field education manual includes general information on risk assessments and reduction, agency safety guidelines, and information on student health care safety preparation. In the agency setting, practicum students are encouraged to be familiar with agency policies and practices regarding risk assessment and reduction and agency guidelines for safety.

### ***Weapons Policy***

Consistent with St. Ambrose University policy, weapons are prohibited on campus, including the North Davenport Education Center.

### **Insurance Coverage**

***Malpractice and Liability Insurance.*** The St. Ambrose University retains group professional liability insurance for students in field education. Students may also wish to consider purchasing individual liability coverage against claims arising out of professional training to cover activities while in the field placement. Students may obtain coverage with the National Association of Social Workers Insurance Trust, a program of the American Professional Agency. Information and applications are available on the NASW Assurance services website. In order to qualify for this insurance, membership to the National Association of Social Workers is required.

***Automobile Insurance.*** Students in field practicum may be asked to use their own cars for agency business (e.g. making home visits, transporting clients, and attending case conferences or organizational meetings). Students are advised to check with the agency to determine if the agency insures the student in these activities. The student is also advised to check with his or her own carrier to determine coverage for these activities. If a student is required to use his or her own car for agency business, it may be advisable to increase insurance coverage. In no case should a student undertake agency business in his or her personal vehicle without adequate coverage.

***Health Insurance.*** At St. Ambrose University, it is the desire that all students have health insurance, but does not REQUIRE coverage. However, a field agency may require coverage based on the nature of the social work services provided. If a student does not have health insurance, there is information on the University Health Services webpage.

## **St. Ambrose University Policies Affecting Students**

Students in the School of Social Work are expected to become familiar with University policies affecting students and to abide by the rules and regulations explicated in these policies. Information regarding Students' Academic Rights and Responsibilities, rights regarding Students Records, the Students Code of Conduct, University Policy Statements, Campus Services, and Student Activities may be found in the *St. Ambrose University Catalog* and the *St. Ambrose University Student Handbook*. The *Student Handbook* is available on the St. Ambrose University Dean of Students web page.

### **Registration**

While University faculty and staff members provide students with academic advice and assistance, each student is expected to take responsibility for his or her education and personal development. The students must know and abide by the academic and disciplinary policies of the School and University. The students must know how and meet requirements of his or her own program of study, enroll in courses appropriate to the program, meet prerequisites and take courses in the proper sequence to ensure orderly and timely progress. Students must seek advice about degree requirements and other University policies when necessary.

Registration may be completed online through the St. Ambrose University system after coordination with the student's academic advisor. Students should meet with their academic advisor to assist in course selection, career direction, and plan of study.

Students are responsible to provide the University with current local and permanent address and telephone numbers. Official correspondence is sent to the address last given to the School of Social Work; if the student has moved and fails to correct this address, they will not be relieved of responsibility on the grounds that correspondence was not delivered.

### **Student Records**

Student rights regarding educational records are articulated in the *St. Ambrose University Student Handbook* and these policies are consistent with the Family Educational Right and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Categories of student information that are public and may be disclosed are identified and students' right to privacy is discussed. Students may review their academic records by requesting them from Records and Registration Office. Students who believe their educational records contain information that is inaccurate or misleading, or is otherwise in violation of their privacy or other rights, are provided with procedures to challenge the information in their record in the *St. Ambrose University Student Handbook*.

The School of Social Work also maintains student records and the policies of the School of Social Work conform to FERPA and University policy. The School of Social Work maintains student and alumni records primarily to benefit students and graduates in educational and professional endeavors. Students are responsible to advise the School of Social Work regarding changes in name, address, telephone, and email. Alumni are

encouraged to advise the School of Social Work regarding changes in their personal and professional status. If requested, these updates in information will be electronically distributed to alumni.

The following are guidelines for the management of these records:

1. Student records in the School of Social Work include admissions material, copies of grade reports, correspondence regarding the student from University offices, correspondence from the School of Social Work to the student or concerning the student and field experience information.
2. Student shall have access to their records insofar as access does not violate the rights of others, in keeping with the University's policy concerning student records. Request for review of School of Social Work records is made in writing to the Program Director. Copies are available to students for the cost of duplication.
3. Data maintained solely for research purposes shall not be personally identifiable.
4. Alumni news is shared electronically and/or in print when graduates of the School of Social Work notify the School regarding a professional or personal life change. Students who do not wish to have this information shared with faculty and alumni are asked to notify the Admissions Coordinator in writing.

### **MSW STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

The MSW-SGA is an organization that assists students in their development as professional social workers who will become valuable assets to the school, university and community. The MSW-SGA serves educational and social purposes. As such, it is a vehicle for students to interact with the School, for students to promote effective communication, and is an instrument of student action for social justice.

The MSW-SGA is comprised of all students enrolled in the MSW program at St. Ambrose University. The advisory board is elected by student vote and works collaboratively with each group of students, in order to facilitate effective communication between faculty, students, and staff of the School of Social Work and the larger community. Additionally, the MSW SGA provides an avenue for student action for social justice. Specialization and Foundation MSW students are welcome.

### **SAU GRADUATE STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

GSGA exists to support and enrich the academic experience and environment for all existing and future graduate programs. Our success is measured by the student's awareness and access to reliable and timely information, services and programs aiding the graduate level student in achieving their academic and professional goals. The group consists of representatives from every graduate and doctoral program to ensure the voices of all students are heard.

### **CANCELLATION OF CLASSES DUE TO HAZARDOUS WEATHER**

The established schedule of class meeting times will be followed unless students are notified otherwise. Please consult the your SAU email, your classroom instructor, Blackboard, the St. Ambrose website, local media, or School of Social Work Facebook page see if St. Ambrose University has cancelled classes. Emergency changes will be posted on classroom doors and the bulletin board if the campus is open at the time of the cancellation. In case of class cancellations, attempts will be made to contact students directly.

In addition, students should sign up for the University Emergency Notification System. The online registration form can be accessed through the SAU Security Office website. By doing this, students can receive alerts regarding class/event cancellations or postponements via email or text message. Students should always use good judgment in deciding on attendance during hazardous weather conditions.

**FOR ALL OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES INFORMATION,  
CONSULT THE ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY STUDENT HANDBOOK.**