



Department of
Social Work

MSW Student Handbook 2023-2024

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Table of Contents

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK.....	4
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK FACULTY AND STAFF.....	5
SOCIAL WORK IS SOCIAL JUSTICE.....	6
MISSION, GOALS, AND COMPETENCIES.....	6
Mission of the Western Carolina University.....	6
Mission of the College of Health and Human Sciences.....	6
Mission of the Master of Social Work Program.....	7
MSW Program Competencies and Corresponding Practice Behaviors.....	7
Advanced Generalist Practice within a Rural Context.....	18
MSW CURRICULUM INFORMATION.....	19
Advising Process.....	19
Course Requirements.....	20
MSW Course Plans: Part-Time, Full-Time Traditional and Advanced Standing.....	21
Waiver Exams.....	24
Time Limitations.....	24
Transfer Hours.....	25
CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND COLLABORATIONS OFFERED.....	25
Addiction Studies Certificate Program.....	25
Culturally-based Native Health Program.....	27
Integrated Health Focus Area.....	27
North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative.....	28
School Social Work Certification Program.....	28
FIELD PRACTICUM.....	30
Employment Information.....	30
ADMISSION AND CONTINUATION IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM.....	31
Criteria for Admission to the Graduate Social Work Program.....	31
Advanced Standing Program.....	31
Instructional Site Admission and Change.....	32
Criteria for Continuation in the Graduate Social Work Program.....	33
Professional and Technical Standards.....	34
Criminal Records (Felony or Misdemeanor).....	34

Agency Drug Screens	34
College of Health and Human Sciences Drug Testing Policy for Students.....	35
UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES.....	35
UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS	36
Appendix A Technical & Professional Standards for MSW Students	39
Appendix B College of Health and Human Sciences Drug Testing Policies	41
Appendix C College of Health and Human Sciences Criminal Background Check Policy.....	48
Attachment A Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students	52
Attachment B Criminal Background Check Policy for Students.....	53
Attachment C MSW Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement	54

All statements made in this and similar publications distributed generally to prospective or admitted students shall be for informational purposes only and should not be interpreted as being contractual for any purpose. The Department of Social Work at Western Carolina University reserves the right at any time, without notice, to change, modify, or cancel any course, program, procedure, policy, or disciplinary arrangement set forth in this handbook whenever, at its sole discretion, it determines such action to be appropriate.

WELCOME TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

*Welcome to Western Carolina University (WCU) and the
Master of Social Work (MSW) program!*

You have chosen to pursue a career in one of the most challenging, rewarding, and exciting professions. The MSW Program prepares students for advanced generalist practice with an emphasis on rural communities. We are committed to developing leaders in the profession who bridge clinical skills and community building; apply critical thinking to complex social issues; and promote social work's commitment to human rights and social justice. We warmly welcome you to this program and profession.

This handbook serves as a resource for students during their enrollment in the MSW program at WCU. It contains contact information for faculty and staff, curriculum and field practicum information, and outlines important college and departmental standards and policies. At the end of the handbook, you will also find a copy of the National Association of Social Worker's Code of Ethics. Please read this handbook carefully and refer to it often. On behalf of the faculty and staff of the Department of Social Work, I wish you much success and hope that you have a productive and fulfilling experience here at Western Carolina University.

Regards,

Patricia M Morse

Patricia M Morse, PhD, MSW, LCSW
Professor
Graduate Program Director
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SOCIAL WORK IS SOCIAL JUSTICE

We affirm to our students that the Department of Social Work supports equity, inclusion and diversity and will not tolerate any discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, political belief, immigration status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, ability or disability, genetic information, and veteran status. To report bias or discrimination, go to:

<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/complaints-and-concerns.aspx>

MISSION, GOALS, AND COMPETENCIES

Mission of the Western Carolina University

As Western North Carolina's regional comprehensive university, Western Carolina University is dedicated to academic excellence, affordability, and access. WCU inspires student learning through innovative teaching, nationally recognized programs, exceptional support, and a robust connectedness with surrounding communities in Southern Appalachia, including the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. Through a broad range of scholarly activities, our faculty and students seek to better understand our region, state, nation, and world. With an emphasis on engaging students both inside and outside the classroom, WCU's bachelor's, master's, and professional doctoral programs in Cullowhee, Asheville, and online aim to improve lives and promote economic prosperity throughout Western North Carolina and beyond.

Mission of the College of Health and Human Sciences

The College of Health and Human Sciences educates and inspires students by innovatively integrating learning, inquiry, and community engagement. The college focuses on enhancing the health and well-being of native and rural communities in western North Carolina and beyond.

Mission of the Master of Social Work Program

The mission of the Master of Social Work program at Western Carolina University is to provide the knowledge and skills necessary to practice at the advanced generalist (MSW) level of Social Work. Congruent with the university's mission to improve individual lives and enhance community development in the predominately rural western North Carolina region, the Department seeks to prepare professionals who are committed to the core Social Work values of respect for all people and advancement of social and economic justice.

Department of Social Work Goals:

Consistent with the Department of Social Work Mission, the goals of the Department of Social Work are to:

1. Provide a curriculum based on the core competencies delineated by CSWE that enables students to gain a common body of social work knowledge, values and skills for advanced generalist practice in a rapidly changing political, social, cultural, and economic environment;
2. Prepare culturally informed social workers for social work practice with diverse populations and client systems of various sizes and types;
3. Prepare social workers who will enhance the well-being of people in rural communities to promote social and economic justice; and,
4. Prepare social workers who will provide leadership for social service agencies and communities in the region.

MSW Program Competencies and Corresponding Behaviors

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

The nine Social Work Competencies as determined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) are listed below. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist foundation level of practice and the advanced generalist specialization level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors.

At the foundation level, the nine competencies are operationalized by 31 behaviors (FBs) reflecting the knowledge, values and skills necessary to practice at the generalist level. The foundation curriculum targets the successful acquisition, integration, and synthesis of essential knowledge necessary to the development of these practice behaviors.

At the specialization level, the advanced generalist practitioner builds upon and synthesizes knowledge and skills gained at the generalist level of practice. As a result, the advanced generalist practitioner demonstrates increased skill and leadership in assessing, planning, intervening, and evaluating across multiple system levels (individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities). All specialization year competencies and behaviors (SBs) are set to meet the program goals of preparing social workers for advanced generalist practice roles using the person-in-environment framework, with particular focus on rural social work.

The advanced generalist practitioner is able to engage in more complex and autonomous practice and is prepared to:

- autonomously and proficiently manage complex direct practice situations,
- use advanced skills to address indirect practice situations at the organizational and community levels,
- engage in theory building and empirical research, and
- move into administrative roles in organizations

Competency-based education rests upon a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, and skills to practice situations in a purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being. The CSWE Educational Policies and

Accreditation Standards (EPAS) recognizes a holistic view of competence; that is, the demonstration of competence is informed by knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that include the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment in regard to unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multi-dimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is seen as developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning.

Using a curriculum design that begins with the outcomes, expressed as the expected competencies, programs develop the substantive content, pedagogical approach, and educational activities that provide learning opportunities for students to demonstrate the competencies.

SOCIAL WORK COMPETENCIES

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

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

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

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

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

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

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

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 1.1: 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

FB 1.2: use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations

FB 1.3: demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication

FB 1.4: use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes

FB 1.5: use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB1.1: Attend to professional roles and boundaries with specific emphasis on rural considerations

SB 1.2: Demonstrate a plan for career-long learning and use of supervision and consultation with special consideration for limited access found in the rural environment

SB1.3: Provide leadership, promote collaboration, and advocate across client populations, colleagues, agencies and communities

SB1. 4: Analyze ethical challenges and dilemmas, including those typically present in rural practice and develop a plan for appropriate responses to these situations in alignment with the NASW Code of Ethics

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 2.1: apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;

FB 2.2: present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and

FB 2.3: apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 2.1: Apply advanced knowledge and skills to engage diversity and difference in practice with appreciation that diversity improves services; and

SB 2.2: Engage in practice that is sensitive to the social, cultural, economic, and practice issues of rural residents, people of color, women, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and other populations that may be at risk.

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

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 3.1: apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and

FB 3.2: engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 3.1: Advocate for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice at the individual, organizational, community, and political level with special emphasis on the needs of rural client systems

SB 3.2: Develop strategies for influencing policy to effect positive change for rural individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities; and

SB 3.3: Demonstrate the ability to select and match change strategies and tactics to the programmatic, organizational, and community

challenges in partnership with people who experience oppression and disenfranchisement.

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

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:
FB 4.1: use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research.

FB 4.2: apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and

FB 4.3: use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 4.1: Apply advanced critical thinking skills and research knowledge to inform evidence based social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations with a specific focus on rural populations

SB 4.2: Integrate theory and practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to inform research design and implementation

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 5.1: Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;

FB 5.2: assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;

FB 5.3: apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 5.1: Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of both agency and public policy on service access and delivery

SB 5.2: Work with community stakeholders as a servant leader, to promote collaboration and facilitate client centered policy change with an emphasis on rural communities

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

- 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 understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies.
- Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 6.1: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in- environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and

FB 6.2: use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 6.1: Differentially apply engagement strategies, knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, and multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks across diverse client systems using evidence-based practices, with particular attention to issues affecting the engagement of rural clients.

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

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 7.1: collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;

FB 7.2: 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;

FB 7.3: develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

FB 7.4: select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 7.1: Demonstrate the ability to collect and synthesize complex data using knowledge of human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in order to assess client systems and inform the selection and planning of evidence-based intervention strategies.

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

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 8.1: critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;

FB 8.2: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in- environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;

FB 8.3: use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;

FB 8.4: negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and

FB 8.5: facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 8.1: Collaborate with, advocate for, and empower client systems in the implementation of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies from inception to ending while applying knowledge of human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary frameworks

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

- 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.

At the MSW Foundation level social work education prepares students to:

FB 9.1: select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;

FB 9.2: apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;

FB 9.3: critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and

FB 9.4: apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

At the MSW Specialization level social work education prepares students to:

SB 9.1: Demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, monitor, evaluate and adjust interventions with client systems while applying knowledge of human behavior and the social environment and multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks with particular attention to issues of rural implementation.

Advanced Generalist Practice within a Rural Context

The Master of Social Work program at Western Carolina University seeks to prepare graduates for generalist social work practice rather than as specialists in a narrow field of practice. A “generalist” is a social work practitioner who uses a broad continuum of knowledge, values, and skills to assess problems and implement solutions, while a “specialist” is a social

work practitioner who has expertise in a specific field of practice, and whose work and activities is primarily focused in that area. The Department of Social Work has chosen to employ the Advanced Generalist Model curriculum because it is well suited to prepare graduate students for advanced practice in rural settings. Not only is Western Carolina University located in the heart of the rural mountains of Western North Carolina, so are many of our potential students and clients. Social workers in rural areas are expected to work with diverse client systems and sizes, and they need to be versatile and flexible, and apply broad knowledge, values, and skills within a wide range of practice levels.

Rural communities, also called non-metropolitan areas, may face more critical social problems than do their urban counterparts (NASW, 2018). For example, high poverty rates, unemployment, inferiority and/or scarcity of health and mental health services, and lack of public transportation are all cited as issues inherent in rural communities. Rural social workers need to provide direct services, facilitate administrative duties, and have the knowledge needed to analyze, develop, and implement social policies.

The NASW policy statement regarding rural social work recognizes the unique issues facing rural populations and supports further training of social workers in rural areas. It states:

“NASW must continue to support the development of social work practice in rural areas by maintaining a presence that creates networking of current social workers and role modeling for future social workers who live in and need encouragement to remain in rural communities. In addition, NASW must promote advocacy, legislation, and policy development that improve the rural infrastructure, economic development, and availability and access to needed health care, reliable transportation, service delivery, public services, and education” (www.naswdc.org).

MSW CURRICULUM INFORMATION

Advising Process

Advising is a collaborative process between students and their faculty advisors. Students should become knowledgeable about degree requirements and should regularly review their transcripts and degree audit

(this can be accessed through the MyWCU site at <https://www.wcu.edu/mywcu/index.aspx>). Assigned faculty advisors are available each semester during pre-registration to meet with students and to discuss course schedules for the upcoming semester.

Course Requirements

The Master of Social Work degree requires 54-60 credit hours of graduate coursework including 900 field practicum hours (300 for the Foundation field placement and 600 for the Specialization field placement). The total number of required hours depends on whether the student qualifies to take and successfully passes waiver exams for SOCW 534 and 535 (see “waiver exams” below). Unless students are accepted into the Advanced Standing Program, all first year (foundation) MSW courses (and first year practicum) must be completed before proceeding to second (specialization) year courses/practicum.

The Master of Social Work Advanced Standing degree requires 33 credit hours of graduate coursework including 600 specialization field practicum hours.

Foundation Year Courses

- SOCW 504: Diversity (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 534: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 535: Research (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 551: Social Policy (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 553: Practice I Foundations of Social Work Practice (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 562: Practice II Psychopathology and Assessment (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 564: Organizational and Community Practice (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 586: Foundation Field Practicum and Seminar (8 hrs.)

Specialization Year Courses

- SOCW 627: Practice III Interventions (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 662: Practice IV Families and Groups (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 664: Leadership and Management (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 673: Rural Community Advocacy (3 hrs.)
- SOCW 686: Advanced Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar I (6 hrs.)
- SOCW 687: Advanced Field Practicum and Integrative Seminar II (6 hrs.)
- SOCW Electives: (9 hrs. for Traditional MSW) – (6 hrs. for Advanced Standing Students)

MSW Course Plans: Part-Time, Full-Time Traditional and Advanced Standing

Full Time Traditional MSW Program (complete in 2 years)

Foundation Curriculum (Year One)

FALL Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Mondays and Tuesdays

SOCW 551: Social Policy (3 cr.)

SOCW 534: Human Behavior in the Soc. Environ (waiver exam available) (3 cr.)

SOCW 553: Practice I: Foundations of Social Work Practice (3 cr.)

SOCW 562: Practice II: Assessment and Psychopathology (3 cr.)

SOCW 504: Diversity, Difference, and Social Justice (3 cr.)

SPRING Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 535: Research (waiver exam available) (3 cr.)

SOCW 564: Organizational and Community Practice (3 cr.)

SOCW 586: Foundation Field Practicum 20-24 hrs/week and Seminar (8 cr.)

SUMMER Semester

SOCW Elective (and/or during the fall/spring semesters) (3 cr.)

Specialization Curriculum (Year Two)

FALL Semester— Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 627: Practice III: Interventions (3 cr.)

SOCW 664: Leadership and Management (3 cr.)

SOCW 686: Advanced Field Practicum I 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SOCW Elective (and/or during the summer) (3 cr.)

SPRING Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Thursdays

SOCW 662: Practice IV: Families and Groups (3 cr.)

SOCW 673: Rural Community Advocacy (3 cr.)

SOCW 687: Advanced Field Practicum II 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SOCW Elective (and/or during the previous summer/fall) (3 cr.)

PART TIME Traditional MSW PROGRAM (4-year program, 3-year option)**

Foundation Curriculum (Year One)

FALL Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Tuesdays

SOCW 553: Practice I: Foundations of Social Work Practice (3 cr.)

SOCW 562: Practice II: Assessment and Psychopathology (3 cr.)

SOCW 504: Diversity, Difference, and Social Justice (3 cr.)

SPRING Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 535: Research (3 cr.)

SOCW 564: Organizational and Community Practice (3 cr.)

SUMMER Semester

SOCW Elective (and/or during the previous summer/fall) (3 cr.)

Foundation Curriculum (Year Two)

FALL Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Mondays

SOCW 551: Social Policy (3 cr.)

SOCW 534: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (3 cr.)

SPRING Semester

SOCW 586: Foundation Field Practicum 20-24 hrs/week and Seminar (8 cr.)

SUMMER Semester

SOCW Elective (and/or during the previous summer/fall) (3 cr.)

Specialization Curriculum (Year Three)**

FALL Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 627: Practice III: Interventions (3 cr.)

SOCW 664: Leadership and Management (3 cr.)

SPRING Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Thursdays

SOCW 662: Practice IV: Families and Groups (3 cr.)

SOCW 673: Rural Community Advocacy (3 cr.)

SUMMER Semester

SOCW Elective (and/or during the previous summer/fall) (3 cr.)

* * When students are admitted to the MSW part-time program, they enter a 4-year program. Part-time students who are interested in pursuing their specialization year field placement and take classes concurrently may be able to finish the regular MSW program in three years. Students who want to

petition to change their full or part-time status after beginning the program MUST submit a written request to the MSW program director, who will consider the request after consultation with the faculty. Students will not be allowed to switch back and forth between the full and part-time programs. Only one “change-in-status” petition will be considered during a student’s enrollment in the MSW program.

Specialization Curriculum (Year Four)

FALL Semester

SOCW 686: Advanced Field Practicum I 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SPRING Semester

SOCW 687: Advanced Field Practicum II 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

Full-time Advanced Standing MSW PROGRAM (complete in 10-months)

SUMMER Semester

SOCW 553: Advanced Standing Bridge Course (3 cr.)

SOCW Elective (3 cr.)

FALL Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 627: Practice III: Interventions (3 cr.)

SOCW 664: Leadership and Management (3 cr.)

SOCW 686: Advanced Field Practicum I 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SOCW Elective (and/or during the summer) (3-6 cr.)

SPRING Semester—Core classes are generally scheduled on Thursdays

SOCW 662: Practice IV: Families and Groups (3 cr.)

SOCW 673: Rural Community Advocacy (3 cr.)

SOCW 687: Advanced Field Practicum II 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SOCW Elective (and/or during the summer) (3-6 cr.)

Part-time Advanced Standing MSW PROGRAM (complete in 2 years)

SUMMER Semester (Year One)

SOCW 553: Advanced Standing Bridge Course (3 cr.)

SOCW Elective (3 cr.)

FALL Semester (Year One)—Core classes are generally scheduled on Fridays

SOCW 627: Practice III: Interventions (3 cr.)

SOCW 664: Leadership and Management (3 cr.)
SOCW Elective (and/or during the summer) (3-6 cr.)

SPRING Semester (Year One)—Core classes are generally scheduled on Thursdays

SOCW 662: Practice IV: Families and Groups (3 cr.)

SOCW 673: Rural Community Advocacy (3 cr.)

SOCW Elective (and/or during the summer) (3-6 cr.)

FALL Semester (Year Two)

SOCW 686: Advanced Field Practicum I 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

SPRING Semester (Year Two)

SOCW 687: Advanced Field Practicum II 20-24 hrs/week (Field Seminar Meets 5 times during the semester) (6 cr.)

Waiver Exams

To prevent students from repeating content mastered in other courses, the Department of Social Work offers students an opportunity to waive two foundation courses: Human Behavior in the Social Environment (SOCW 534) and Research (SOCW 535). Students who pass the waiver exam with an 80 or above may waive that course. Students may only take the exam once and no substitute course is necessary. Each waiver exam can be taken NO LATER THAN one week before the start of each course. Waiver exam dates will be announced each summer in the weeks before fall semester begins and each winter before the spring semester begins.

To qualify for a waiver exam, a student must have taken an approved human development or research methods course in their undergraduate education within the last five years (though the course does not need to be in Social Work). Students who wish to request permission to take the waiver exam must obtain approval of the MSW Program Director by sharing a copy of their undergraduate course syllabus. The MSW Program Director will determine if the course content is similar enough to warrant a potential waiver of the course.

Time Limitations

In accordance with the policies of the Council on Social Work Education, requirements of the MSW degree are expected to be completed within no more than two years for the full-time program and within four years for the

part-time program. Students will not be allowed to switch back and forth between the full and part-time programs. Students who want to petition to change their full or part-time status after beginning the program will be asked to submit a written request to the MSW program director, who will consider the request after consultation with the faculty. Only one “change-in-status” petition will be considered during a student’s enrollment in the MSW program.

Transfer Hours

The Department of Social Work at Western Carolina University does not grant graduate credit hours for life experiences, previous work experiences, or field practicum hours. A maximum of twelve graduate social work credit hours with a grade of B or higher and taken within the last six years may be transferred from a CSWE- accredited graduate social work program. Students may need to provide the university catalog, syllabi or other materials for an assessment to be made regarding which courses are transferable.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS AND COLLABORATIONS OFFERED

The Department of Social Work offers five certificate and collaboration programs:

- Addictions Studies Certificate Program
- Culturally Based Native Health Certificate
- Integrated Health (HRSA-BHWET Stipend Recipient opportunity)
- North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative to earn the Department of Social Services Pre-Service Certificate
- School Social Work Certification Program

Addiction Studies Certificate Program

The Department of Social Work offers an Addictions Studies certificate program. Individual courses in the certificate program are also open as elective courses to graduate students who are not enrolled in the certificate program providing there is room. After successfully finishing each course, students will be given documentation allowing them to apply the hours towards licensure or certification in addiction specialist practice at a later date. Four courses (3 credit hours each) are taught as part of the addiction

studies certificate program for a total of 12 credit hours. These courses enable students to complete the 180 hours of addiction-specific education mandated by the NC Addiction Specialist Professional Practice Board (NCASPPB), and together cover all the competencies needed for licensure in addiction specialist practice in North Carolina.

Students in the program will also be required to complete their specialization field practicum in an addictions-related practice area and receive clinical supervision from a NCSAPPB certified clinical supervisor/intern.

The four courses described below are designed to meet the NCASPPB requirements for addiction specialist licensure. The courses may be instructed at both the Biltmore Park instructional site and the main campus in Cullowhee. Students are expected to first complete SOCW 520, Addictions, before taking the other three courses.

- **SOCW 520 – Addictions:** This course is designed to present students with an overview of the complex issues related to addictive disorders, including drugs, alcohol, gambling, and food addictions.
- **SOCW 522 – Methods of Addictive Disorder Treatment:** This course is designed to provide students with the clinical knowledge and skills specific to treating people with addictive disorders. [PREQ SOCW 520]
- **SOCW 524 – Cultural Humility in Addictive Disorder Treatment:** This course provides an overview of unique problems and needs of diverse populations of individuals with addictive disorders. [PREQ SOCW 520]
- **SOCW 525 – Science of Addiction:** The course presents an overview of the role of genetics and brain function as they relate to addiction, the physiological and psychological problems caused by misuse of substances, as well as basic pharmacology of drugs of use. Issues concerning the legal system from basic laws to policy and how they impact people with addictive disorders will also be examined. [PREQ SOCW 520]

Interested students should contact Addictions Studies Coordinator, Aron Plantenberg at aplantenberg@wcu.edu or 828.227.2703.

Culturally-based Native Health Program

The Culturally-Based Native Health Program provides training for health professionals serving Native peoples, grounded in a tribal community, and integrated into the core of Western Carolina University. The graduate certificate program is for health professionals who serve American Indian populations in the South and the East. This interdisciplinary, online program requires 12 hours of courses and is intended to reach a population of students considered underrepresented and underserved. This culturally-oriented certificate option will enable professionals in the region, who are Cherokee or serve a Native American population, to acquire the cultural knowledge and methodological understanding to serve more effectively in their professions. For more information contact program director Lisa Lefler (llefler@wcu.edu; 828-227-2164) or go to this [site](#).

Integrated Health Focus Area

The Integrated Health program is aimed at expanding the behavioral health workforce serving the needs of individuals across the lifespan who have or are at risk of mental health and substance use disorders and reside on the Qualla Boundary, home of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and across the Western North Carolina (WNC) region of Southern Appalachia. As part of a 4-year federal grant which began in 2017, students may apply for a stipend up to \$10,000 in their Specialization year funded by Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Advanced Standing and part-time students are also eligible to apply. A limited number of stipends are available.

Students will have completed coursework in Integrated Healthcare (SOCW 530) and an online Interprofessional Education module, identified an appropriate integrated health field placement, and engage in a variety of interprofessional education experiences, be in good academic standing, and sign a letter of commitment. For more information, contact Project Coordinator Assistant Professor Emma Miller at 828.227.3333 or at emiller@wcu.edu

North Carolina Child Welfare Education Collaborative

The NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative (Collaborative) is a program designed to provide educational support to BSW and MSW students who are interested in working in public child welfare (Department of Social Services) in North Carolina upon graduation. The Collaborative seeks to strengthen public child welfare services in the North Carolina by increasing the number and diversity of well-trained and highly-committed BSWs and MSWs employed in local Department of Social Services (DSS) offices. For more information about the program, please go to the NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative homepage at <http://ssw.unc.edu/cwec/>

At WCU, both BSW and MSW students can participate in the NC Child Welfare Education Collaborative program. All students who participate in the Collaborative at WCU must (1) take the SOCW 426 (BSW students) or SOCW 526 (MSW students) Child Welfare course, (2) participate in a week long, intensive online training a few weeks prior to beginning field placement, (3) complete the non-competitive Collaborative application online (the application opens for a few weeks each semester, dates will be announced), (4) attend the Collaborative orientation (typically offered online a few weeks after the application deadline, and (5) a field placement in a child welfare services position at a NC Department of Social Services office.

In exchange for completing these requirements, upon graduation Child Welfare Collaborative Scholars and Collaborative Waiver students will receive the DSS Pre-Service Certificate.

If you are interested in applying to be a NC Child Welfare Collaborative Scholar, discuss your interest in applying for the Collaborative with Dr. Tonya M. Westbrook twestbrook@wcu.edu.

School Social Work Certification Program

School Social Work is a specialized area of practice within the broad field of the social work profession. School social workers bring unique knowledge and skills to the school system and the student support services team. They are instrumental in furthering the purpose of the schools - to provide a setting for teaching, learning, and for the attainment of competence and

confidence. School social workers are hired by school districts to enhance the district's ability to meet its academic mission, especially where home, school, and community collaboration is the key to achieving that mission.

In order to be a certified school social worker in North Carolina, one has to complete a bachelor's or master's degree in social work from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program with additional specialized preparation in school social work. Within these school social work education programs, several standards are studied such as the foundations of school social work practice, assessment and evaluation, cultural diversity, consultative and collaborative relationships and understanding of the role of advocacy and facilitation. Also required are intervention strategies to support student development, discernment of statutes and case law and completion of a school social work internship comprising of a minimum of 400 contact hours in a school setting.

School social workers are expected to apply their professional training in schools in order to support student success. Their capacity to influence student success is clearly influenced by school social worker-to-student ratios (No Child Left Behind recommends one-masters-degreed-school-social-worker-to-800-students ratio; the School Social Work Association of America recommends one master's-degreed social worker per 400 students). Through specialized school social work programs that strengthen the home/school/community partnership and address barriers to student learning, school social workers serve as catalysts in promoting student wellbeing and successful completion of school.

The program at Western Carolina University offers the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction approved School Social Work course online each summer and has the option of the additional education course being offered either online or face-to-face at WCU.

Please contact Dr. Kristina Lind for more information at 828.227.3893, klind@email.wcu.edu

Required:

SOCW 528: School Social Work Policy and Practice is offered online and is a required course

Select one education course option from those listed below:

SPED 502: Issues in Special Education,

SPED 504: Educational Programs for Students with Behavioral Disorders
SPED 620: Education in a Diverse Society
EDCI 607: Foundations of Teaching Leadership in a Diverse Society

FIELD PRACTICUM

An essential element of Social Work education is the field practicum. This experience gives students the opportunity to gain practical experience in preparation for professional Social Work practice. Through this experience, they may test their own values and attitudes and develop an awareness of self which is vital for successful Social Work practice. Please see the MSW Field Education Manual for the most recent policies.

MSW students are required to complete two field placements; the first, called the Foundation placement, requires 300 hours and is completed during the spring semester of the first year in the program. The second field placement, referred to as the Specialization placement, requires 600 hours and is completed during the fall and spring semesters of the second year in the program. Both placements require an average of 20 hours/week during the weeks that University is in session. *(Please note that these numbers have been reduced from 336 and 672, following the Council on Social Work Education's guidance that COVID-19 related program changes can be extended through May of 2022.)*

Students are enrolled in field seminar courses concurrent to each placement, as well as other courses. Part-time students may complete the MSW program in three or four years rather than the standard two, and are responsible for communicating with the Director of Field Education regarding their plans for entering field. Part-time students complete the classroom-based portion of each half of the curriculum (Foundation and Specialization) in advance of the field placement portion.

Advanced Standing students are exempted from the Foundation placement and complete only the year-long Specialization placement. (See the Field Manual for additional information.)

Employment Information

It is strongly advised that students not combine full-time employment and

full-time enrollment in the graduate program. Based on the experiences of other learners, this creates challenges in punctuality, class attendance, participation, completion of assignments, and significant difficulties in completion of field education.

ADMISSION AND CONTINUATION IN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM

Criteria for Admission to the Graduate Social Work Program

Only candidates who have earned a bachelor degree from an accredited university will be considered for the Master of Social Work program. Applicants are required to submit 3 professional references (at least 1 must be academic) and bachelor degree transcripts. Applicants must write an essay that reflects their personal goals, professional experiences, potential contributions to the MSW program, and their understanding of diversity and the NASW Code of Ethics.

Successful applicants will have:

- GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 hours of undergraduate course work, or at least a 2.85 on a 4.0 scale cumulatively,
- Adequate undergraduate preparation (18 semester hours) with a range of studies in the liberal arts, humanities, physical sciences, diversity, and behavioral sciences, and
- Some human services related experience is recommended, including volunteer work

Advanced Standing Program

The MSW Advanced Standing program is designed for students who have graduated from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)-accredited BSW program within the past 5 years. Admission to the Advanced Standing Program allows students to complete their MSW degree in 10 months (full-time) or 2 years (part-time) by waiving the first-year foundation course requirements. Students applying for this option must demonstrate their readiness to function at the level of a second-year MSW student. Acceptance into the Advanced Standing Program is not automatic, and admission to the program is highly competitive. Admissions are limited to

students who have excelled academically and professionally.

Additional Eligibility Requirements for Advanced Standing:

- Earned bachelor degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited program within the past five years
- Overall GPA of 3.2 or above
- Three exceptional letters of recommendation; At least one must be from a faculty member familiar with the applicant's academic work, and one additional recommendation must be from the applicant's undergraduate field instructor. If the applicant is employed in a social work-related job, a recommendation from the applicant's supervisor is desired.
- MUST complete entire application packet prior to January 15 deadline. Applications submitted after this deadline are reviewed only if space is available.
- Students who have not completed their undergraduate degree at the time of application must do so before the beginning of summer classes. Any offer of admission will be provisional until evidence of satisfactory completion of the BSW degree is received.

The Advanced Standing Program is comprised of the specialization year courses plus 6 credit hours of Social Work electives (30 credit hours) and three credit hours of a summer preparation course (SOCW 553-Advanced Standing Bridge Course). Upon successful completion of the summer term with an earned grade of "B" or above, students will join the ongoing MSW class and enroll in the second year (specialization year) of the regular MSW program. Full-time and Part-time status in the Advanced Standing Program are available.

Instructional Site Admission and Change

Students are admitted to a specific WCU instructional site (either Cullowhee-Health and Human Sciences Building or Asheville-Biltmore Park) based on the preference indicated on the student's MSW application when possible. Students are required to enroll in all core courses at their assigned instructional site throughout the duration of their tenure in the MSW Program. Elective courses may be taken at either instructional location. In the event a student cannot be admitted to the instructional site of their preference, the student will be offered enrollment in the other instructional site.

Students may not enroll in core courses at an instructional location to which they were not admitted. In this circumstance, students will be asked to return to the instructional site to which they were admitted.

Criteria for Continuation in the Graduate Social Work Program

Students in the MSW program must take courses in the prescribed sequence and must maintain an average of B (3.0 GPA) to be eligible for a graduate degree. In addition, any student who receives three grades of C or one F will automatically be dismissed from the Graduate School and the MSW program. A student who is dismissed due to academic reasons is not allowed to register for additional graduate courses and is not eligible to reapply to the program until the following spring or fall semester has elapsed. Students who are dismissed from the Graduate School may choose to petition the Dean of the Graduate School one time for readmission. Approval for readmission may be accompanied by additional requirements. If readmitted, the student must then meet all of the requirements in effect under the catalog at the time of readmission. A readmitted student who receives any additional grades of C or lower will be permanently dismissed.

In addition to the above grade expectations, students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the professional and ethical guidelines delineated in the NASW Code of Ethics. Failure to do so may result in immediate dismissal from the program. Students may also be dismissed for violating the WCU academic integrity policies or the WCU Social Work Professional and Technical Standards.

Students are expected to demonstrate the ability to meet all of the technical and professional performance standards outlined in the MSW Student Handbook. (Appendix A). All students will be evaluated according to these standards by the Graduate Student Progressions Committee each semester. The progressions committee consists of the students' instructors who are teaching them that semester, instructors who taught them in prior semesters as deemed appropriate, and will include the Graduate Program Director, Director of Field Education and the Department Head. If it is determined that the student has issues of concern that are presently hindering their performance, or will potentially hinder performance in the future, they will be notified in writing of the issue(s) by the Graduate Program Director. A student may be invited to present their views to the

Graduate Program Director and/or the Graduate Student Progressions Committee, depending upon the nature of the issue or concern.

Decisions of the progressions committee may include:

- a. Continuance in the program.
- b. Provisional continuance in the program. Continuance will be permitted provided specific criteria are met within a specified time frame. The criteria will be specified in writing and a follow-up meeting will be held to consider whether the criteria have been met.
- c. Termination from the social work program.

A student who is dissatisfied with the decision of the committee may appeal the decision in writing to the department head within ten working days of the decision. The student must specify reasons for disagreement with the committee's decision. The department head will review the appeal and will make the final decision. A student who is dismissed from the program for academic reasons may choose to appeal by following the College of Health and Human Sciences appeal procedures. Appeals follow the process outlined in the Graduate School Catalog.

Professional and Technical Standards

The Social Work Professional and Technical Standards are described in Appendix A of this manual. These standards describe the physical, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral requirements of Social Work students. Compliance with these standards is required for admission, continuation, and graduation.

Criminal Records (Felony or Misdemeanor)

The Department of Social Work expects student(s) with prior criminal convictions to have indicated this status on the application for admission. The College of Health and Human Sciences requires students to undergo a criminal background check prior to entering their field placement. Any findings on the background check may affect continuation in the program and/or field placement options and/or future licensure. The Criminal Background check policy can be found in Appendix E of this manual.

Agency Drug Screens

Select agencies may require students to complete a drug screening prior to participating in a practicum at their agency. If a student produces a positive drug screen, they may be removed from the field agency. The MSW Admissions and Progression Committee will meet within one week of receiving the results to determine whether or not the student will be allowed to continue at another field agency or will be dismissed from the MSW program. The student may remain in lecture courses while their case is being decided. Students who wish to contest the drug screen results may obtain another drug screen at their own expense within 24 hours of receiving the initial results.

College of Health and Human Sciences Drug Testing Policy for Students

Reasonable suspicion drug testing may be conducted when individualized and objective evidence exists to support the conclusion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired. Evidence of a student's use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs or impairment may be provided by any individual, including employees of affiliated clinical agencies. Reasonable suspicion drug testing will be coordinated through the office of the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences, and the determination of whether drug testing is warranted under the facts and circumstances shall be made by the Dean and the University General Counsel. (See Appendix D for further information.)

In addition, any criminal charges as a result of drug or alcohol use that occur while a student is in attendance at WCU may also result in disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MSW program and the University.

UNIVERSITY, COLLEGE, AND DEPARTMENTAL POLICIES

SOCIAL WORK IS SOCIAL JUSTICE: We affirm to our students that the Department of Social Work supports equity, inclusion and diversity and will not tolerate any discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, religion, political belief, immigration status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, ability or disability, genetic information, and veteran status. To report bias or discrimination, go to:

<https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/complaints-and-concerns.aspx>

Classroom Visitors

Any visitor to the classroom must be authorized by the instructor. Children or other guests are not permitted in the classroom unless authorized by the instructor. Pets are not permitted in the classroom unless they are service animals or are integral to the instructional activity and prior approval has been obtained.

APA Documentation

Students are ALWAYS expected to use APA style when writing papers and citing references (unless expressly stated by a course instructor). For writing tips and help on APA documentation go to: <http://www.wcu.edu/11743.asp> or go to Purdue's OWL site at https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html

CHHS Emergency Action Plan

Western Carolina University is committed to a safe and healthful environment that protects its students, faculty, staff, and the public, as well as its property. Employees and students at every level are responsible and accountable for the University's overall safety. Complete and active participation by everyone, every day is necessary. All staff and students are responsible for following all procedures detailed in the College of Health and Human Sciences Emergency Action Plan as well as working safely to prevent incidents.

As a student, you must know:

- The location of the closest emergency exit throughout the Health and Human Sciences building for all your classes and other common areas (these may be exits you don't normally use).
- Safe procedures for emergency evacuation, shelter in place, and adverse weather as well as other emerging situations.
- Emergency evacuation assembly areas.
- How you will be contacted during emergencies - consider signing up for the RAVE system

WCU Graduate Student Catalog

Students are expected to follow policies and requirements found in the WCU Graduate Student Catalog (<http://catalog.wcu.edu/index.php>) as well as those in this Social Work Handbook.

UNIVERSITY SUPPORTS

Office of Accessibility Resources

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-services/disability-services/> Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities and/or medical conditions. Students who require reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and/or medical condition and provide current diagnostic documentation to the Office of Accessibility Resources. All information is confidential. Please contact the Office of Accessibility Resources at (828) 227-3886 or come by Suite 137 Killian Annex for an appointment.

Student Financial Support

Student Emergency Fund: WCU students with an immediate financial hardship resulting from an emergency, accident, or other critical incident can apply for a one-time funding award of up to \$500. The expense must be unexpected, unforeseen, and of an urgent nature. Applicants must be currently enrolled students, undergraduate or graduate students, and taking at least one credit hour in the current semester. Students may apply for funds when they have exhausted all other resources (including but not limited to financial aid eligibility). All applicants must provide detailed documentation of need (lease agreement, utility bill, etc.). For more information or to apply, go to <https://www.wcu.edu/experience/dean-of-students/>

Counseling, Psychological Services, and Psychiatric Assistance

The Counseling and Psychological Services Center, Bird Building, 2nd Floor, Room 225 provides free, confidential student services including individual and group counseling and therapy, emergency on call, consultation, and outreach programming to aid students with educational, personal or psychological concerns. Contact the Center at 227-7469 for assistance or visit their web page at <https://www.wcu.edu/experience/health-and-wellness/caps/>

Hunter Library:

Hunter Library provides students with access to group and individual study spaces and to thousands of information resources: print and electronic books, newspapers, and scholarly journal articles.

These resources can be searched online and often accessed there (<http://www.wcu.edu/hunter-library>) or library staff and subject specialists

skilled in their specific disciplines can be contacted via the library's research guides (<http://researchguides.wcu.edu/>).

Canvas Support:

The WCU learning management system is Canvas and can be found at

<https://www.wcu.edu/canvas/index.html>

Additional help with Canvas can be found at

<https://www.wcu.edu/canvas/index.html>, (828) 227-7487 or by visiting the

Technology Commons located on the ground floor of the Hunter Library.

Information Technology

Need Help? Call the ITS Desk at 227-7487 or TOLL FREE at 866-WCU-

7ITS Technology Commons Ground Floor Hunter Library

<http://ithelp.wcu.edu> Email: itshelp@email.wcu.edu

Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. – 10:00 p.m.

Friday: 8:00 a. m. – 5:00 p.m.

Writing and Learning Commons (WaLC)

The [Writing and Learning Commons](#) (WaLC), located in BELK 207, provides free [small- group course tutoring](#), one-on-one [writing tutoring](#) and [academic skills consultations](#), and online [writing](#) and [learning](#) resources for all students. All tutoring sessions take place in the WaLC or in designated classrooms on campus. To schedule tutoring appointments, log in to TutorTrac from the WaLC homepage (walc.wcu.edu) or call 828- 227-2274.

Distance students and students taking classes at Biltmore Park are encouraged to use [Smarthinking](#) and the WaLC's online resources. Students may also take advantage of writing tutoring offered at the Biltmore Park campus on certain days of the week; call 828-227-2274 or log in to TutorTrac and select "Biltmore Park Writing Tutoring" for availabilities.

Academic Calendar includes dates for all breaks, university closures, final exams, etc. The academic calendar can be found at:

<https://www.wcu.edu/learn/academic-calendar.aspx>

Appendix A Technical & Professional Standards for MSW Students

The technical standards outlined below are required for admission to, retention, and graduation from the Department of Social Work at Western Carolina University. These standards, describe the physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioral requirements of social work students. They are designed to provide reasonable assurance that students can participate fully in all aspects of coursework and the field practicum, with or without accommodation, resulting in successful graduation from the program.

Technical Standards

1. Observation: Students must be able to:
 - Accurately observe clients to effectively assess their situations.
 - Have functional use of the senses and sufficient motor capability to carry out the necessary assessment activities.
2. Communication: Students must be able to:
 - Communicate effectively with other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals, and exemplify a willingness and ability to listen to others.
 - Demonstrate effective communication in oral presentations, written assignments, small group settings, and through electronic means.
 - Perceive and interpret nonverbal communication.
 - Use spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program.
 - Comprehend reading assignments and search and evaluate the literature.
 - Demonstrate competency in writing skills.
3. Sensory and Motor Functions: Students must have sufficient sensory and motor abilities to:
 - Attend class and complete the required number of hours during their field practicum.
 - Maintain consciousness and equilibrium and have the physical strength and stamina to perform satisfactorily in the classroom and in social work agency settings.
4. Intellectual, Conceptual, Integrative and Quantitative Functions: Students must have the ability to:
 - Think critically, analyze and interpret objective and subjective data, and apply effective problem solving skills. These skills allow students to make proper assessments, use sound judgment, appropriately prioritize therapeutic interventions, and measure and report client outcomes.
 - Demonstrate skills of recall using long and short term memory, inferential reasoning, application of knowledge, and evaluation of predicted outcomes at appropriate levels in the program.
5. Self Awareness: Students must exhibit:
 - Knowledge and openness to learning how one's values, attitudes, beliefs, emotions and past experiences affect thinking, behavior and relationships.
 - Willingness to examine and change their behavior when appropriate and work effectively with others in subordinate positions as well as with those in authority.
6. Emotional and Mental Stability: Students must demonstrate the ability to:
 - Deal with current life stressors through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms effectively by using appropriate self-care and developing supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others.
 - Effectively use help for medical or emotional problems that interfere with academic and clinical performance.

Professional Performance Standards

The Department of Social Work recognizes that preparation for professional practice requires more than scholastic achievement. The program expects students to exhibit behaviors that are consistent with professional performance. Such behavior is expected not only in the classroom but throughout the University and the larger community. Some specific examples of professional performance standards are outlined below.

Students must demonstrate: A commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics (Linked here: [Code of Ethics](#)).

- The essential values of social work including the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).
- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.
- A commitment to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.
- completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and criticism in a positive manner.
- A commitment to serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person's age, class, race, religious affiliation (or lack of), gender, disability, sexual orientation and/or value system.

Appendix B College of Health and Human Sciences Drug Testing Policies

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES
Approved 1-2017

ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING POLICY for STUDENTS

I. University Policy Statement

Western Carolina University (the "University") is committed to maintaining a drug- free workplace and academic environment in compliance with the federal Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988 and in accordance with University Policy #38, Illegal Drugs, and University of North Carolina Policy 1300.1, Illegal Drugs. Further, the University is committed to provide campus experiences for its students that are safe, legal, and responsible, in accordance with University Policy #81, General Campus Policy for Alcoholic Beverages, and the University Code of Student Conduct.

II. University Interests

The University recognizes its responsibility to provide for a safe learning environment for University students and personnel, as well as a safe clinical/internship setting for patients and employees of affiliated agencies. The use of alcohol and/or drugs, lawfully prescribed or otherwise, which interfere with the student's judgment or motor coordination poses an unacceptable risk to the aforementioned. For the foregoing reasons, the College has adopted this policy to further the following interests of the University:

1. To prevent the possession, consumption or distribution of illegal drugs, which violates applicable federal and state law, University Policy #38 and/or the University Code of Student Conduct and substantially adversely impacts the efficacy and integrity of the Programs;
2. To promote the safe, legal, and responsible purchase, consumption or possession of alcohol, in accordance with University Policy #81, General Campus Policy for Alcoholic Beverages;

3. To cooperate with affiliated agencies by ensuring, to the extent possible, that students comply with agency policies, rules, and regulations pertaining to the placement of students in clinical/internship experiences, including agency alcohol and drug testing policies;

III. Definitions

1. Drug testing means the scientific analysis of urine, blood, breath, saliva, hair, tissue, and other specimens of the human body for the purpose of detecting an illegal drug or alcohol.
 - a. Pre-placement drug testing means drug testing conducted prior to a student engaging in a learning experience at an affiliated agency if the agency requests such testing.
 - b. Reasonable suspicion drug testing means drug testing conducted on a student because individualized and objective evidence exists to support the conclusion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired. Facts that could give rise to reasonable suspicion include, without limitation: observed possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol; the odor of alcohol or drugs; impaired behavior such as slurred speech; decreased motor coordination; difficulty in maintaining balance; marked changes in personality or academic performance or behavior; reports of observed drug or alcohol use; an arrest or conviction for a drug or alcohol related offense; positive pre-placement or other drug tests; or newly discovered evidence of drug test tampering.
 - c. Repeat drug testing means a drug test that is repeated following a positive test. This test will be conducted within 5 days following notification of a positive test and will test the broadest spectrum of drugs.
 - d. Random drug testing means drug testing where employees or students of affiliated agencies are tested randomly at the discretion of the agency without reasonable suspicion.
2. "Impaired" means that a person's mental or physical capabilities are reduced below their normal levels (with or without any

reasonable accommodation for disability). An impaired student, by virtue of his/her use of alcohol, illegal or legal drugs, exhibits deteriorated motor/psychomotor function, reduced conceptual/integrative/synthetic thought processes, and/or diminished judgment and attentiveness compared with previous observations of the student's conduct and performance. For purposes of this policy, the term impaired shall also mean addiction and/or physical or mental dependence upon alcohol, illegal, or legal drugs.

3. "Illegal drug" means (1) any drug or substance whose use, possession, and manufacture are regulated by the Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services pursuant to Article 5 of Chapter 90 of the North Carolina General Statutes (the "Controlled Substances Act"); or (2) a drug whose use is strictly controlled by a physician's prescription or other order and such use is inconsistent with the prescription or other order.
4. "Legal drug" means any drug or substance that is available without a prescription and/or any drug or substance that has been prescribed by a healthcare provider.
5. "Program" means all degree granting programs in the CHHS.
6. Each program will have one or more "Program Designees" that will oversee student affairs issues.

IV. College Procedural Requirements

A. Prohibited Conduct and Duty to Notify of Charges/Convictions

1. All conduct specified in University Policy 38 Illegal Drugs and Illegal Use or Abuse of Alcohol (Policy 38) and University Policy 81 Alcoholic Beverages (Policy 81) is expressly prohibited. The terms of Policy 38 and Policy 81 shall be made a part of this policy. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit or otherwise constrain the terms of Policy 38 or Policy 81.
2. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit or constrain the terms of any agency drug testing policy or scheme.
3. Under no circumstance should a student participate in Program courses or educational experiences while he/she is impaired.
4. Under no circumstance should a student manufacture, consume, possess, sell or distribute illegal drugs or alcohol in violation of applicable federal and state laws and/or applicable

Program and University policies, including the University Code of Student Conduct.

5. Students have an affirmative duty under this policy to report any criminal charges, convictions or plea agreements that are related to the manufacture, use, possession, sale or distribution of an illegal drug, or to the purchase, consumption or possession of an alcoholic beverage. Such violations, if substantiated, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program, in accordance with established Program disciplinary policies and procedures. Such violations will also result in a referral to the Department of Student Community Ethics (“DSCE”) for investigation and University discipline if warranted.
6. A student who violates any provision of this Section IV.A will be deemed to be unable to meet the essential functions and technical standards of their Program and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program.
7. A student should be aware that a positive drug test may impede his/her ability to part-take in clinical/internship experiences and therefore may impede his/her ability to progress in a Program.

B. Agreement to Submit to Drug and Alcohol Testing

1. A student entering or progressing in a Program that requires a drug test(s) as a condition of enrollment must submit to the said drug testing as required by the Program.
2. A student participating in a Program must agree to submit to pre- placement drug testing; reasonable suspicion drug testing when circumstances warrant such testing; and/or repeat drug testing as required by the Program.
3. All students shall sign an acknowledgment and consent form (Attachment A) that evidences the student’s consent to: (a) comply with University, College, and Program policies pertaining to alcohol and illegal drugs; (b) comply with all policies and regulations of affiliated agencies pertaining to alcohol and illegal drugs; (c) submit to all drug testing as described in this policy; and (d) authorize the disclosure of drug testing results to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences (CHHS) or his/her

designee. Refusal to sign the acknowledgment and consent form shall be grounds for non-placement in clinical/internship experiences and subsequent dismissal from the Program.

C. Actions Following Positive Drug Tests

1. Upon receipt of a positive drug test, the Dean of College of CHHS or his/her designee shall inform the Program Designee of the positive drug test, the student who received the positive test, as well as any other information needed to evaluate the positive drug test.

The Program Designee shall notify the student in writing of the result of the drug test; the option to repeat the drug test one time; as well as any disciplinary action imposed. The repeat drug test shall be conducted by a mutually agreed upon qualified vendor and all costs of the repeat test shall be borne by the student.

If a student chooses to submit to a repeat drug test, any appeal time-line designed in this policy shall be stayed until the Program Designee notifies the student of the result of the repeat drug test.

A student who receives a positive drug test, or a positive repeat drug test, will be subject to disciplinary action.

2. Disciplinary action at the Program level for a positive drug test will be decided by a designated group of Program faculty and may include dismissal from the Program. Program level disciplinary action may be appealed pursuant to Section D of this policy.
3. A positive drug tests will also be referred to Department of Student Community Ethics (DSCE) for investigation pursuant to the Western Carolina University Student Code of Conduct (Code).
4. Students that are dismissed from the University are dismissed from the Program.
5. Any attempt to tamper with, contaminate or switch a sample during any drug test will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the Program and will be referred to the

DSCE for investigation pursuant to the Code.

6. If a student is permitted to continue in the Program following a positive drug test result, the agency that required the test may handle the issue according to its policy. In the event that the agency refuses to permit the student to continue with the agency an alternative placement will be sought; however, if placement cannot be found the student may not be able to progress through the program, depending on the program's requirements.

D. Program Appeal

1. A student who wishes to appeal the decision of the Program have the option to do so in writing to the Dean of CHHS within five (5) days of notification as specified in Section C.1.
2. The Dean may request in writing supportive information from the student, which must be provided within 5 days of the Dean's request.
3. The Dean will decide on the case within five (5) days of receiving all requested information.
4. The Dean may base his/her decision on any or all information provided and/or learned through investigation conducted him/herself or others.
5. In order to maintain an appeal, a person must remain a student in good standing of the university. All appeal rights terminate with the loss of student status.

E. Pre-Placement Drug and Alcohol Testing

1. Pre-placement drug testing will be coordinated through students' Program and will be conducted by a qualified vendor or as determined by the affiliated agency. The cost of all drug testing shall be borne by the student, unless it is otherwise provided by the affiliated agency. Any positive pre-placement drug test shall be evaluated pursuant to this policy.
2. If a student is permitted to continue in the Program following a positive pre-placement drug test result, the agency that required the test will handle the issue according to its policy. In the event that the agency refuses to permit the student to work with the agency an alternative placement will be sought; however, if placement cannot be found the student may not

be able to progress through the program, depending on the program's requirements.

F. Reasonable Suspicion Drug and Alcohol Testing

1. Reasonable suspicion drug testing may be conducted when individualized and objective evidence exists to support the reasonable suspicion that a student (1) has engaged in the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs in violation of applicable policies, laws, and regulations; or (2) appears to be impaired.
2. Evidence of a student's use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs or impairment may be provided by any individual, including employees of affiliated agencies.
3. The determination of whether or not reasonable suspicion testing is warranted shall be made by an agency, or by the Program Designee and Dean of CHHS.
4. Reasonable suspicion drug testing will be coordinated through the student's Program Designee, and the cost of drug testing shall be borne by the student.

V. Confidentiality

All drug testing results shall be used, maintained, and disclosed by the College and/or University only as permitted by and in strict compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations pertaining to confidential and protected health information and student records.

Appendix C College of Health and Human Sciences Criminal Background Check Policy

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES CRIMINAL BACKGROUND SCREENING POLICY FOR STUDENTS

Policy Statement

Western Carolina University and the College of Health and Human Sciences (College) is committed to the safety of the campus community and the agencies, clients, and patients we serve. All students who are formally accepted into undergraduate or graduate programs that require clinical internships* in the College of Health and Human Sciences must participate in a criminal background screening prior to placement in the clinical internship. The individual degree program(s) will determine initial and subsequent criminal background screening requirements and deadlines. Students who do not comply with the program requirements may delay their clinical placement, delay their progression within the program, and/or may be dismissed from the program.

*Exceptions to this Policy (do not require clinical internships):

Environmental Health
Online EMC program
Undergraduate Communication Sciences and
Disorders Undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics

Procedures:

1. Initial criminal background check (CBC) will be performed by a third party vendor under contract with UNC/WCU/College of Health and Human Sciences (e.g., Certiphi), with the results of the Investigation sent to the College of Health and Human Sciences Dean's Office for review and judgment in accordance with applicable College policies and procedures.
2. All initial, additional and subsequent required criminal background screenings will be at the student's expense.
3. The program designee will submit student names and the deadline for when the CBC must be completed to the Dean's Administrative

Assistant (DAA). The DAA in the College of Health and Human Sciences will monitor completion of the CBC and report incomplete screenings to the appropriate Program Designee prior to clinical placement. If CBC information is not available at a designated time, the student's matriculation through the program may be negatively impacted as clinical sites can make the ultimate decision on pass vs. fail of a CBC; therefore, clinical placement is not assured.

4. If a CBC indicates a criminal history that could impact the student's ability to be placed in a clinical setting, progress in the specific program, and/or successfully complete the specific program, the DAA will notify the College Dean, the College Associate Dean, and Program Designee of the students' identity. The Program Designee will then notify the student that the CBC Review Committee will be reviewing his/her case. The Associate Dean will assemble the CBC Review Committee; an ad hoc subcommittee of the College Clinical Education Committee composed of five members including the Program Designee and the College Associate Dean who will serve as ex officio (non-voting) chair of this committee.
5. At the request of either the student or the CBC Review Committee, the student may present additional information to the CBC Review Committee. Additional information must be made available to the College Associate Dean within 5 calendar days following notification to the student that the CBC Review Committee will be reviewing the case.
6. Once all information is available, the CBC Review Committee will make a recommendation based on criteria listed in Appendix A, and any materials presented by the student. The College Associate Dean will communicate the committee's recommendation to the student, the Program Designee and the College Dean.
7. The College Dean shall have access to all information regarding the student, including but not limited to all information made available to the CBC Review Committee. In addition, the College Dean may request new information from the student, which must be presented within 5 calendar days of the request. The College Dean will either accept the recommendation of the CBC Review Committee or make an alternative decision. The Dean's office will notify the appropriate Program Designee and the student of the final decision.

Note: Confidentiality of Records

Criminal background check records are confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than (1) faculty/staff involved in the review as indicated above, including the CBC Review Committee membership, and (2) with the agencies or hospitals that request them pursuant to applicable law and policy.

Individual Courses

On occasion students who take particular courses, but are not yet accepted into any programs within the College, are required to submit a CBC to participate in an "observation activity" at a particular agency that requires background screening. In these cases the results will be submitted to the agency/hospital setting for review as appropriate. Those students who are unable to participate in the activity due to activity discovered on their CBC will be required to withdraw from the course or receive a failing grade.

The CBC Review Committee will review the student's CBC for the following felonies. A conviction or plea of guilty or no contest to any of the felonies noted below may disqualify the student from participating in a clinical learning experience in the College.

Additionally, this may preclude a student from being admitted or completing an academic program within the College.

- a. Homicide
- b. Kidnapping and abduction
- c. Assaults with weapons or inflicting serious injury
- d. Rape or other sex offense
- e. Abuse, neglect or exploitation of children, disabled adults or elder adults

Other types of felony or misdemeanor convictions, including sale, possession, distribution or transfer of controlled substances, robbery or larceny, program specific offense as supplied by the program to the College Dean, or questionable criminal histories will be reviewed by the CBC Committee in accordance with the following criteria:

- a. Would the student pose a threat to the health and safety of the university community and any patient or client?
- b. Discipline expectations and requirements (e.g..

Program specific offenses).

- c. Discipline received from external sources (e.g. courts, administrative agencies, etc.)

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Attachment A Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students
(Print, Sign, and Submit to the Department of Social Work)

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

College of Health and Human Sciences Acknowledgement and Consent Form

Students in the Programs shall be familiar with applicable legal and ethical requirements set forth in state licensure laws and regulations pertaining to healthcare professions and occupations.

I have read and understand the College of Health and Human Sciences Alcohol and Illegal Drug Testing Policy for Students ("Policy"). I also have had an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

By my signature below, I agree to comply with the requirements of this Policy, and all applicable policies and regulations of the University and affiliated agencies. Further, as a condition of participation in the Program, I knowingly and voluntarily consent to submit to any drug testing required by the University, College, or Program, or any requisite pre- placement drug testing or random drug testing required by an affiliated clinical agency.

I hereby authorize the disclosure of any and all drug testing results to the Dean of the College of Health and Human Sciences or his/her designee.

I hereby agree, for myself and on behalf of my successors, heirs, and assigns, to hold harmless and waive any and all claims and release, satisfy, and forever discharge Western Carolina University and its trustees, officers, and employees, and the University of North Carolina and its governors, officers, and employees from any and all actions, claims, damages, judgments, demands, rights, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, arising out of or in connection with the College's, Program's, and University's administration of the Policy.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Name

Attachment B Criminal Background Check Policy for Students
Print, Sign, and Submit to the Department of Social Work

WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
College of Health and Human Sciences Acknowledgement and Consent Form

I have read and understand the College of Health and Human Sciences Criminal Background Check Policy for Students ("Policy"). I also have had an opportunity to ask questions about the Policy.

By my signature below, I agree to comply with the requirements of the College, Program, this Policy, and all applicable policies and regulations of the University and affiliated clinical agencies

I hereby agree, for myself and on behalf of my successors, heirs, and assigns, to hold harmless and waive any and all claims and release, satisfy, and forever discharge Western Carolina University and its trustees, officers, and employees, and the University of North Carolina and its governors, officers, and employees from any and all actions, claims, damages, judgments, demands, rights, and causes of action of whatever kind or nature, arising out of or in connection with the College's, Program's, and University's administration of the Policy.

Student Signature

Date

Printed Name

Attachment C MSW Handbook Receipt Acknowledgement
(Use the QR code or link to complete acknowledgement & submit to the
Department of Social Work)

I have received the MSW handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and adhere to the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

Link: <https://forms.office.com/r/3FS72qzwh3>

