



School of Social Work

MSW Student Handbook

Academic Year 2017-2018

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PART A: INTRODUCTION TO THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

WELCOME

On behalf of the faculty and staff of the School of Social Work, I am delighted to welcome you to the MSW program. I hope you will join us in being active, caring members of both Radford University and the region it serves. The School provides a dynamic environment for teaching and learning that strengthens and nurtures intellectual, emotional, technical, and practical knowledge and skills. Our faculty and staff encourage and support innovative scholarship, practice, and research. We strive for excellence in teaching, advising, and mentoring. Community service is an important part of our work that links the School and its resources with local communities to provide service and support in furtherance of the goals of eliminating poverty and injustice, improving community life, and solving challenging social issues. We invite you to join us as we work together to renew and strengthen community based family practice.

The information provided in this manual will answer many of your questions regarding the program and its structure. You will also want to familiarize yourself with the Graduate College Catalog. Understanding your rights and responsibilities as presented in this Handbook and the Graduate Catalog is essential to your success in the program. Advising is an integral part of our program, and we hope you will work closely with your advisor to develop a program of study appropriate to your interests and goals. We are here to support your growth and we wish you well in achieving your goals.

Again, welcome!

Deneen L. Evans, Ph.D., MSW
MSW Program Coordinator & Assistant Professor

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK <https://php.radford.edu/~sowk-web/>

Radford University borders the beautiful New River near the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwestern Virginia. Radford is situated in a dynamic mix of small cities and rural settings in the New River and Roanoke Valley which was settled by European immigrants who placed a high value on families and family loyalty extending to second and third cousins. The society of the region continues to be grounded in family ties. Ties to the community have also been necessary for survival and provide a sense of identification, given the strong sense of place common to the area. For African American families who make up over a quarter of the population in Roanoke where our extended campus is located, 'family' goes beyond blood into fictive kin - others who have shared the diaspora of Black families in America. One of the predominant issues in both the New River Valley and in Roanoke is the scarcity of resources, thus networking across systems becomes essential. Competent masters prepared social work practitioners must focus on the family as a system and sub-system of the community, the family as a co-creator and contributor to the community, as well as understanding the strengths and needs of the community as a whole.

Consistent with the University's central focus, the School of Social Work seeks to provide the highest quality professional social work education in a context of developing the student's professional, intellectual, and ethical capacities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The faculty and staff of the School of Social Work at Radford University believe that the highest quality of social work education builds on the values and ethics of the profession. We fully integrate cultural competence into our strengths based approach and strive to promote social justice at all system levels. We utilize the ecological systems perspective to guide our understanding of individuals in the socially constructed environment. Our students graduate with strong advocacy skills, use evidence-based models, and have the ability to evaluate their own practice.

The School of Social Work prepares social work professionals who are capable of adapting their practice to the environments in which they work. The program context comprises a dynamic mix of small cities and rural settings. We build and maintain partnerships with the surrounding communities that are dually focused on education and service. The signature pedagogy of our School is the integration of coursework in the field placement.

The MSW program prepares professionals capable of autonomous practice with a specialty in community based family practice. Our students develop the ability to practice clinically with diverse, self-defined families and to partner with them to make skillful contributions to the family-community continuum.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

MSW Program—Foundation: The overarching goal of the MSW social work program at the foundation level is to introduce students to the social work perspective. Students completing the foundation are not yet autonomous social work practitioners but have the skills, knowledge base, and perspective to pursue studies in the concentration year. Completers of the Radford University MSW foundation will be able to:

1. Delineate the values and ethics of the social work profession, including
 - a. identifying and articulating one's own personal values;
 - b. recognizing how one's own values impact assessment and intervention;
 - c. identifying how the NASW Code of Ethics relates to social work practice;
 - d. identifying ethical dilemmas affecting practice and services to clients;
 - e. recognizing that ethical dilemmas can be resolved through appropriate decision-making processes

- f. recognizing that social work practice does not discriminate on the basis of age, culture, class, ethnicity, disability, gender, national origin, race, religion, and sexual orientation; and
 - g. engaging in continued professional growth and development.
- 2. Develop culturally competent techniques for work in diverse cultural contexts, including
 - a. recognizing diversity within and between groups;
 - b. recognizing the forms and mechanisms of racism, oppression, and discrimination and their impact on client systems;
 - c. critically analyzing and applying culturally appropriate theories and knowledge about client systems within environmental contexts;
 - d. demonstrating knowledge of how the ecological perspective works with diverse client systems.
- 3. Use practice knowledge and skill to promote alleviation of poverty, oppression, and other forms of social and economic justice, including
 - a. analyzing historical and current trends in social welfare policy and service delivery;
 - b. analyzing research relevant to service delivery; and
 - c. using knowledge of economic, political, and organizational systems to analyze, implement, and influence policies consistent with social work values.
- 4. Function effectively within the structure of organizations and across service delivery systems, including
 - a. using appropriate practice-relevant technologies within the context of organizational resources and facilities;
 - b. using supervision and consultation appropriately to improve practice and enhance services to clients;
 - c. coordinating with and within service delivery systems, using internal and external resources professionally; and
 - d. analyze and comprehend service delivery systems.
- 5. Demonstrate how the generalist practice model can work with client systems of all sizes, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, including

- a. using knowledge and theories of individual, family, group, organizations, and community to assess interactions among individuals and other social systems;
- b. appropriately applying relevant research findings to social work practice;
- c. employing evidence-based best practices when using professional knowledge and skills;
- d. using communication skills appropriate to client systems, colleagues, and community members;
- e. applying critical thinking skills within the context of social work practice;
- f. working collaboratively with professionals from other disciplines nationally and internationally;
- g. evaluating one's own practice effectiveness and sharing findings appropriately;
- h. demonstrating professional use of self through self-awareness and appropriate use of supervision;
- i. utilizing a strengths/ecological/systems perspective in their work with diverse client systems; and
- j. employing appropriate social work roles with client systems to include advocate, case manager, broker, enabler, organizer, facilitator, counselor, mediator, educator, and evaluator.

MSW Program—Concentration. The overarching goal of the concentration year is to prepare our graduates to be competent, advanced community based family practice practitioners. These graduates will be able to:

1. analyze, intervene, and evaluate, with a high degree of autonomy and proficiency;
2. promote social and economic justice; to confront injustice and oppression; and to work to eliminate poverty and social problems with individuals, families, groups, and organizations, locally, nationally, and globally;
3. demonstrate reciprocity in their practice, as a part of the ecological perspective, collaborating, communicating, and consulting at every level; joining with allies to confront oppression, engage in social change, and affect policy; practicing empowering, strengths-based multicultural practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities;
4. critically evaluate and modify the quality of their own practice, analyzing their own values and those of the profession;
5. apply advanced information technology to inform community based family practice;

6. demonstrate skills in research design, analysis, and knowledge dissemination; and assume accountability for ethical practice.

CONCENTRATION SPECIFICS

The concentration in Community Based Family Practice (CBFP) places an emphasis on assisting students to develop the knowledge and skills to apply evidence-based, holistic, multi-theoretical, multi-systemic methods of working with people in the context of family and community. Research has found that multiple strategies are necessary to successfully address the issues of poverty and substance abuse that the citizens of the region frequently encounter. CBFP is grounded in the belief that we are all connected and part of a larger system. Graduates learn to work across systems in order to identify and meet needs and create positive synergy for growth and change.

In the concentration year of the RU MSW program, students will demonstrate the following EPAS Competency and practice behaviors (Revision 2015):

- 2.1.1 CBFP1. Develop, manage, and maintain autonomous professional relationships with clients and client systems.
- 2.1.2 CBFP1. Successfully address ethical dilemmas that arise in community-based family practice by applying a recognized model of ethical decision-making and consulting.
- 2.1.3 CBFP1. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of multiple theoretical perspectives and apply them to client situations.
- 2.1.4 CBFP1. Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of diversity and intersectionality in shaping the life experiences of client systems in local communities.
- 2.1.5 CBFP1. Use knowledge of the effects of oppression, discrimination, or historical trauma on clients and client systems to guide practice.
- 2.1.6 CBFP1. Critique existing research that can be applied to community-based family practice.
- 2.1.7 CBFP1. Apply social work theories to clients and client systems in the family-community continuum. 2.1.7 CBFP2. Recommend and evaluate interventions that enhance the connection between people and their communities.
- 2.1.8 CBFP1. Communicate to stakeholders (e.g. funders, clients, family members, community members, legislators) the implication of policies and policy change in the lives of clients.
- 2.1.9 CBFP1. Tailor practice to small cities and rural areas.
- 2.1.9 CBFP2. Engage in, facilitate, and strengthen civic engagement.

2.1.10(a) CBFP1. Develop a culturally responsive client-centered working alliance.
2.1.10(a) CBFB2. Attend to the interpersonal dynamics and contextual factors that both strengthen and potentially threaten the working alliance.

2.1.10(b) CBFP1. Use multidimensional clinical assessment tools congruent with community-based family practice (e.g. bio-psycho social spiritual, family assessment).
2.1.10(b) CBFP2. Use multidimensional macro assessment tools congruent with community-based family practice (e.g., organizational, community).

2.1.10(c) CBFP1. Use appropriate evidence-supported interventions to address the presenting concerns identified in the assessment.

2.1.10(d) CBFP1. Identify and use evaluations of their own practice.

The grant program housed within the School of Social Work is congruent with CBFP:

1) The School of Social Work houses the *Community Resource Adoptive and Foster Family Training (CRAFFT)*. This initiative is a statewide grant program whose primary focus is training and supporting resource, foster, kinship, and adoptive families throughout Virginia. The state is divided into six service areas and each area has a designated CRAFFT coordinator who works at a state University within/bordering the service area. The two coordinators, serving the Western and Piedmont areas of Virginia, are based in the RU SSW. The goals of the CRAFFT program are directly related to state program improvement goals that focus on better outcomes for children in our foster care system.

PART B: PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The MSW Program prepares social workers for practice in a complex, rapidly changing environment. Through the carefully designed course of study social workers are prepared to practice with individuals, families, and communities diverse in race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and religion. This involves learning the value of diversity and the deconstruction of oppression. Students in the standard program complete a minimum of 61 credit hours and those in the advanced standing complete a minimum of 40 credit hours. Full-time standard students can complete the program in two years. Part-time standard students can complete the program in four years in Radford and three years in the year-round extended campus in Roanoke. Advanced Standing full-time students can complete the program in one year and part-time advanced standing students can complete the program in two years on either campus.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

The standard program begins with the theory courses. These courses include Human Behavior in the Social Environment I and II (SOWK 601 & 602). Theory provides a framework for the critical analysis of social work practice whether that is at the individual, family, organizational, community, or policy level. It is also the lens through which research is viewed, critiqued, and developed.

During the first year, students are introduced to the generalist perspective of social work practice. An emphasis is placed on learning and critically analyzing the knowledge, values, and skills for working with diverse individual, families, groups, and communities. In addition to theory, two practice courses (SOWK 631 & 632), a research course (SOWK 621), and a policy course (SOWK 611) are taken along with the field practicum and seminars (SOWK 641 & 642).

The concentration year curriculum prepares graduates for practice in community based family practice (CBFP). The two practice courses (SOWK 783 & 784) are designed to prepare students for CBFP at multiple levels. The research (SOWK 772) and policy (SOWK 761) courses support CBFP as well. The concentration practicums (SOWK 791 & 792) are developed collaboratively to meet programmatic and individual needs. SOWK 682, Biopsychosocial assessment supports the practicum and practice work by providing students with diagnostic skills within the biopsychosocial risk and resiliency theoretical framework. The Integrative Seminar (SOWK 785) is taken during the final academic year semester. In this course, the integrative and comprehensive poster project is completed, pulling together all aspects of the academic curriculum as applied to the topic of the student's own choosing.

Electives round out the course of study. Through the choice of electives it is possible to focus your learning in a particular direction. Courses are offered that provide the student with the potential to place an emphasis in Clinical Social Work or School Social Work. It is also possible

to tailor an individualized program of study to gain an emphasis in child welfare or community/organizational practice.

The program of study is outlined on the following pages. The field placement is an integral part of the curriculum. This is where the theory and skills learned through the academic courses are applied. Therefore, students complete 410 clock hours in the foundation field placement (with an additional 36 clock hours in field seminar) and 600 clock hours in the concentration placement (with an additional 36 clock hours in field seminar). The Field Seminar integrates the practice experience gleaned from the placement with the rest of the academic curriculum. For more information on field, see the Field Education section of the *MSW Student Handbook*.

CURRICULUM

Students who are enrolled at the Radford campus may attend on a full-time (degree paths A or C below) or part-time basis (degree paths B or D below). Students enrolled through the Roanoke site pursue a part-time option (degree path E).

Students are admitted to a cohort defined by the site (Radford, Roanoke) and their enrollment status (full-time or part-time). Students will only be permitted to change from one cohort to another with the approval of their advisor and the MSW Coordinator. Approval of such requests is contingent on available slots in the requested cohort.

Radford Standard Program: full time/part-time

DEGREE PATH A: STANDARD PROGRAM, FULL-TIME (5 SEMESTERS, 61 CREDITS)

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
SW 601	SW 602		SW 682	SW 784
SW 611	SW 621	*Elective	SW 772	SW 761
SW 631	SW 632	*Elective	SW 783	SW 785
SW 641	SW 642	*Elective	SW 791 (5 cr.)	SW 792 (5 cr.)

Key: SW 601/602: HBSE I & II. SW 611/761: Policy I & II. SW 621, 772: Research I & II.

SW 641/642: Foundation field. SW 631/632: Foundation Practice I & II.

SW 791/792: Concentration field (5 credits each). SW 783/784: Concentration Practice I & II.

SW 682: Biopsychosocial assessment. SW 785: Integrative seminar. Three graduate electives.

DEGREE PATH B: STANDARD PROGRAM, PART-TIME (11 SEMESTERS, 61 CREDITS)

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
SW 601	SW 602	*Elective	SW 631	SW 632	*Elective
SW 611	SW 621		SW 641	SW 642	

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
SW 682	SW 761		SW 783	SW 784
SW 772	*Elective		SW 791	SW 792
				SW 785

Radford Advanced Standing: full-time/part-time

DEGREE PATH C: ADVANCED STANDING, FULL-TIME (4 SEMESTERS, 40 CREDITS)

SUMMER	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
SW 678	SW 682	SW 761	Elective
SW 679	SW 772	SW 784	Elective
	SW 783	SW 785	
	SW 791 (5 cr)	SW 792 (5 cr)	

Key: SW 678/679: Bridge courses for Advanced Standing students.

DEGREE PATH D: ADVANCED STANDING, PART-TIME (6 SEMESTERS, 40 CREDITS)

SUMMER	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING
SW 678	SW 682	SW 761		SW 783	SW 784
SW 679	SW 772	*Elective	*Elective	SW 791 (5)	SW 785
					SW 792 (5)

Roanoke Part-time Program

DEGREE PATH E: STANDARD PROGRAM, PART-TIME, SATURDAY CLASSES (9 SEMESTERS, 61 CREDITS)

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
SW 601	SW 602	SW 631	SW 632	SW 682	SW 761
SW 611	SW 621	SW 641	SW 642	SW 772	Electives (2)

FALL	SPRING	SUMMER
SW 783	SW 784	SW 785
SW 791 (5 cr.)	SW 792 (5 cr.)	Elective

Key: SW 601/602: HBSE I & II. SW 611/761: Policy I & II. SW 621, 772: Research I & II.

SW 641/642: Foundation field. SW 631/632: Foundation Practice I & II.

SW 791/792: Concentration field (5 credits each). SW 783/784: Concentration Practice I & II.

SW 682: Biopsychosocial assessment. SW 785: Integrative seminar. Three graduate electives.

THE ADVANCED STANDING OPTION IS NOT AVAILABLE IN ROANOKE

POSTER SESSION/COMPREHENSIVE EXAM

Policy Statement

A final, comprehensive examination is required of all MSW degree candidates at Radford University. The exam is provided in the Integrative seminar course (SOWK 785) which is taken at the end of the program of study for the MSW degree. Students are eligible to take the course in the semester that they complete all degree requirements or with only six hours of elective credits remaining for degree completion. The exam is an oral poster presentation (based on a required paper in the course) which allows each student to focus on a chosen topic in order to demonstrate an integration of the academic curriculum and the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities of an autonomous practitioner of social work.

Background

As a School of Social Work, faculty members believe that the comprehensive poster examination is an experience that will organize and provide depth to students' knowledge of the profession, as well as provide an evaluation of their academic and field work at Radford University.

The purpose of the poster session is to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate the skills, abilities, and knowledge obtained in the MSW program. Since the course requires each student to demonstrate her or his ability to integrate all aspects of the curriculum, students take it at the end of their program of study.

Poster preparation and content: Students select a social problem of interest and relate the information to materials covered in core courses (HBSE, Practice, Policy, Research, Field) and related areas (cultural competence/diversity, social/economic justice, Social Work values and ethics) including assigned readings. Candidates should have a working knowledge of the basic issues, concepts, and methods of analysis stressed in these courses, particularly as they relate to the central topic of their poster. Initially a brief description of the poster topic is required. Students are required to briefly indicate the central question that they are investigating. Students need to indicate how the topic, and their presentation of it in a poster, speaks comprehensively to the knowledge gained in the different areas of the MSW curriculum (i.e., HBSE, policy, practice, research) and how it deals with issues of diversity, values/ethics, and social & economic justice.

The following questions need to be considered in preparing for the poster session:

- Will a careful reader learn enough to ask informed questions? Will a casual observer walk away understanding the major findings after a quick perusal of your material?
- Ask yourself, "What would I need to know if I were viewing this material for the first time?"
- How could professional social work practice benefit from this information?

Candidates are encouraged to use their imagination and creative abilities to create a poster that will generate questions from poster raters and add to the body of knowledge. The final conclusions should leave observers focused on a concise statement of the important findings and implications. For more specific policies, please see the course syllabus.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

Computers are available for student use in the School of Social Work on the second floor of Waldron College (WCH) as well as in McConnell Library and various labs across the Radford campus. Computer labs are also available in Roanoke and both campuses have extensive wireless networks. Library resources are available in McConnell Library and through the library's website. Students are required to access the library orientation modules for review of APA format and to avoid plagiarism. For assistance with problems related to technology, the RU IT help desk can be accessed at:

helpdesk@radford.edu

CENTER FOR DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Center for Diversity and Inclusion provides resources to the entire RU campus to support underrepresented populations. It is located in Tyler Hall, room 25.

<http://www.radford.edu/content/student-affairs/home/dean-of-students/diversity.html>

STUDENT COUNSELING SERVICES

Student Counseling Services exists to support students through stressful times. SCS provides quality mental health care to Radford University students by qualified professionals. The Counseling Center is located in the lower level of Tyler Hall.

<https://www.radford.edu/content/student-affairs/home/student-health/counseling.html>

FITNESS CENTERS

Radford University has opened a new Recreation & Wellness Center:

<http://www.radford.edu/content/recreation/home/facilities/rec-center.html> , as well as fitness options in Peters & in Muse.

CENTER FOR ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

The Center for Accessibility Services provides equal educational opportunities for all students. RU provides reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Please see p. 19 of this manual for more information:

<http://www.radford.edu/content/student-affairs/home/dean-of-students/disability-resources.html>

MSW STUDENT BODY

MSW students at both campuses are given the opportunity to elect representatives from their class to represent their interests to the faculty. As stakeholders in the program, their voices are important to faculty decision-making. The President and Vice-President of the class are responsible for coordinating other efforts of interest to students, i.e., mentoring incoming students, community service projects, and social gatherings. Two clubs are open to students within the School of Social Work: The Association of Black Social Workers & the MSW Diversity Club (information available from student representatives or the MSW Program Coordinator)

Advising

Purpose and Intent

Advising serves three primary purposes:

- to provide each student with a faculty member who knows the student, who can serve as a resource and advocate appropriately for student needs;
- to monitor student progression through the program and ensure that all requirements of the MSW program and the student's individualized program of study are met; and
- to provide the School with a clear channel through which to carry out administrative functions for each student.

The intent of academic advising is to establish a supportive environment in regard to the student's strengths, interests, career goals, and current learning needs.

Policy statement

Every full-time or part-time student is assigned an advisor by the MSW Coordinator. Faculty advisors are available as academic, career, and support consultants to the student on any matter of concern or interest to the student relevant to the School of Social Work and the student's functioning within the School.

Process and procedures

Step 1

When a student is accepted into the MSW Program as a full time or part-time student, the MSW Coordinator assigns a member of the full-time faculty as an academic advisor in the fall semester. In the case of advanced standing students, who are admitted during the summer session, the MSW Coordinator (or her/his designee) serves as the advisor for the summer.

Step 2

The MSW Coordinator is responsible for assigning academic advisors and will send an advising list to faculty and staff within the first 3 weeks of the fall semester. Students meet their assigned advisors during the mandatory orientation for the MSW program. The advising list is posted within the School of Social Work.

Step 3

Students complete their program of study under the tutelage of the advisor at the time of Orientation. Although the core curriculum of the MSW program of study is set, students must consult with their advisor to decide on appropriate electives to round out their program of

study. ***The choice of electives is extremely important to students who which to seek state licensures (i.e., LCSW or school social work).*** It is strongly recommended that students meet with their advisors at least once each semester, as early in the semester as possible.

Step 4

The faculty advisor is available to the student via appointments, telephone, and/or email. In problematic situations, the student can call upon the advisor for assistance.

Step 5

If a serious academic or non-academic concern is identified by either by the student or the advisor, the MSW Coordinator serves as a consultant and advocate in the process of resolving the difficulty.

Procedure for Changing Advisors

Students may change advisors by contacting the MSW Coordinator to request such a change. If the student has chosen a new faculty advisor, they should make sure that faculty member is available and agreeable to the change.

Elective Emphasis Areas

Students select elective courses according to their interests and abilities. All electives must be approved by the student's advisor and the MSW Coordinator. Students may select one of the elective emphasis areas described below, or they may individualize their program of study through their choice of electives. The following elective emphasis areas represent cohesive programs in one of three areas of practice: clinical social work, school social work, or an individualized course of study. The elective emphasis areas available to students include

- Clinical Social Work (emphasis in mental health, preparation for licensure): Two clinical electives and a clinical field placement are required. Several elective options are available, and must be taken within the School of Social Work, examples are: SOWK 615, SOWK 710. This emphasis also requires the advanced field placement to be located in an organization that will provide a foundation for clinical work as defined by the Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work in the Code of Virginia (Chapter 37 of Title 54.1, p. 3): "Clinical social work services include the application of social work principles and methods in performing assessments and diagnoses based on a recognized
- manual of mental and emotional disorders or recognized system of problem definition, preventive and early intervention services and treatment services, including but not limited to psychotherapy and counseling for mental disorders, substance abuse, marriage and family dysfunction, and problems caused by social and psychological stress

or health impairment.” The final placement must also be supervised by a licensed clinical social worker or a MSW with at least three years of experience post MSW. Students are advised to complete the final integrative paper on a topic relevant to clinical social work.

- *School Social Work* (only for standard program students wishing to obtain certification as a School Social Worker): Two electives, SOWK 720 & EDSP 651, are required, plus one field placement in a public or accredited private primary or secondary school. The School of Social Work has an agreement with the state board about these electives to recognize these two electives as the two required graduate education electives.
*Optionally - Graduates who have taken these two electives, but have not had the required field placement, may choose to pursue a provisional endorsement through full-time supervised experience in a public or accredited private primary or secondary school. For more information, please consult the regulations governing school social work: (p. 9 & p. 69) http://www.doe.virginia.gov/teaching/licensure/licensure_regs.pdf
Students are advised to complete the final integrative paper on a topic relevant to school social work.
- *Social Work with Military Populations*: Students who are interested in specializing in social work with military populations in rural areas are required to: complete the military social work elective, and complete a concentration field placement with the military population. The concentration placement must be supervised by a licensed clinical social worker or a MSW with at least three years of experience post MSW. Students are advised to complete the final integrative paper on a topic relevant to military social work.
- *Individualized program of study* (for students not selecting the options above): Student selects electives based on their interests and abilities, in consultation with their academic advisor.

Students who wish to complete more than one elective emphasis after degree completion will be required to be readmitted to RU as a non-degree seeking student. Students are advised to check with Financial Aid about eligibility before embarking on this plan of action.

PROFESSIONAL, ETHICAL AND ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

All students are held to academic and non-academic standards. Academic competence is required, so each student is required to maintain the required course grades and GPA. A student who receives more than two grades of “C” or lower in any work attempted at Radford University shall be dismissed. The receipt of one C automatically places a student in the MSW program on academic probation. If at any point after a student has completed 9 credit hours in his or her program of study and the student’s cumulative grade point average is at least a 2.0 but less than a 3.0, he or she will be placed on probation. In accordance with the policies of the RU Graduate College, if a student is dismissed from a program she or he may not enroll again in the Graduate College until two academic years have passed.

Additionally, each student must abide by the *Radford University Standards of Student Conduct*, the Radford University *Honor Code*, and the *Waldron College Standards for Professional Practice*

Education, and the *NASW Standards of Cultural Competence*. Further, the *Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers* (NASW) provides the framework for professional social work practice and also for social work action; therefore, all social work students must follow the *NASW Code of Ethics* as they pursue their education. Students are required to read each document and should consult their advisor about any questions they may have. Students must sign an acknowledgement verifying their intent to abide by all of these standards upon admission to the MSW program. This form will be kept in the student's file.

Summaries of each document are provided below, along with a URL for the full text.

Radford University *Standards of Student Conduct*

All students at Radford University must abide by the *Standards of Student Conduct*. This publication includes the *Honor Code* as well as other policies governing student conduct both on and off campus. It includes policies regarding sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, physical and verbal abuse, and alcohol and drugs. It also describes the procedures for dealing with violations of the *Standards of Student Conduct*, including the student's procedural rights to appeal and the possible sanctions that may be imposed by Radford University. This document is available online at:

<http://www.radford.edu/content/dam/departments/administrative/student-affairs/Dean%20of%20Students/RUStandards.pdf>

Radford University *Honor Code*

The Radford University Honor System provides the foundation for a university community in which freedom, trust, and respect can prevail. In accepting admission to Radford University, each student makes a commitment to support and uphold the Honor System without compromise or exception. The students of Radford University believe that individuals have the right to compete fairly, to keep what they have earned, and to have others accept their word without question. Individuals have the responsibility to be honorable in their own conduct and to insist other students act honorably.

Lying, cheating, and stealing are considered to be acts of dishonor, and will, therefore, cause a student to be subject to temporary or permanent suspension from the university community. Students who commit an honor violation or any members of the Radford University community who have knowledge that a student has committed an honor violation are expected to comply with the reporting procedures.

The Honor Pledge:

"I shall uphold the values and ideals of Radford University by engaging in responsible behavior and striving always to be accountable for my actions while holding myself and others to the highest moral and ethical standards of academic integrity and good citizenship as defined in the Standards of Student Conduct."

<http://www.radford.edu/content/dam/departments/administrative/student-conduct/RUStandards.pdf>

Waldron College *Standards of Professional Practice Education*

This document sets out *Standards of Professional Practice Education* that apply to students enrolled in the Waldron College of Health and Human Services at Radford University involving the health, welfare, and safety of people across the lifespan. The Waldron College has distinct expectations of students that are in addition to those outlined in the Radford University *Standards of Student Conduct*. These standards are linked to students' abilities to become effective health and human service professionals and are provided so that students can be clear about expectations and procedures to address practice performance. The ultimate goal of the standards is to help students become successful health and human service professionals.

All students are expected to read the Waldron College *Standards of Professional Practice Education*. Students must sign an acknowledgement verifying their intent to abide by these standards upon admission to the MSW program. This form will be kept in the student's file. The Waldron College *Standards of Professional Practice Education* is found at:

<http://www.radford.edu/content/dam/colleges/wchs/STANDARDS%20OF%20PROFESSIONAL%20PRACTICE%20EDUCATION-%20SPRING%202012.pdf>

The *Standards of Professional Practice Education* addresses communication as well as interpersonal, cognitive, physical, and professional performance skills. Also covered is an overview of emotional and mental abilities necessary for professional practice. These include stress management and emotional and mental capabilities. Professional commitment, professional behavior, self-awareness, and ethical obligations are covered. Finally, the sources of evidence are provided, followed by the accommodations for disabilities.

Persons who teach and supervise students, along with program coordinators, assess student academic performance and apply their professional judgment to determine if standards are being met during a student's educational career. Professional judgment is the capacity to assess a situation by applying the values and knowledge of related professionals, combined with a professional's own experience and practice wisdom. It also represents the application of knowledge, values, and skills to make decisions in an ethical and competent manner.

NASW *Code of Ethics*

Preamble

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social

context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social [and economic] justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

Service
Social Justice
Dignity and worth of the person
Importance of human relationships
Integrity Competence

This constellation of core values reflects what is unique to the social work profession. Core values, and the principles that flow from them, must be balanced within the context and complexity of the human experience. The NASW Code of Ethics is found at:

<http://www.naswdc.org/pubs/code/code.asp>

NASW Standards for Cultural Competence

"NASW supports and encourages the development of standards for culturally competent social work practice, a definition of expertise, and the advancement of practice models that have relevance for the range of needs and services represented by diverse client populations" (NASW, 2000b, p. 61, as cited in the Introduction to NASW Standards for Cultural Competence, 2001, p. 7.). NASW Standards for Cultural Competence are found at:

<http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/NASWCulturalStandards.pdf>

PART C: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADMISSIONS

It is the goal of the Radford University MSW Program to prepare eligible students with an advanced professional degree, enabling them to work autonomously with expertise in community-based social work practice with families. The policy of the School of Social Work at Radford University is to provide a set of procedures to be used in determining student admission into the Master of Social Work Degree Program. In accordance with the School of Social Work's By-laws, these procedures are to govern the process and procedures of application into the program.

The admissions procedures for the MSW Program are conducted in cooperation with the Graduate College of the University. These procedures are stated in Radford University's Graduate catalog: <http://www.radford.edu/content/grad/home/admissions/graduate-catalog.html> All graduate admission information and the process for application can be found on-line at the School's web-site: <https://php.radford.edu/~sowk-web/> This information includes both the Graduate College's requirements as well as the School of Social Work's requirements. Specific criteria must be met of all applicants seeking admission into the MSW Program. Additional criteria are also set forth by the Graduate College of the University for applicants. These are spelled out in the procedures outlined below.

The MSW degree is structured to meet both the needs of full-time students and those who wish to study on a part-time basis. The main campus is located in Radford, Virginia and the extended campus part-time program is located in Roanoke, Virginia.

An advanced standing option is available for full-time and part-time students at the Radford campus who are qualified graduates of CSWE accredited BSW Programs within the past 7 years. All persons applying to the Advanced Standing program must have a minimum GPA of 2.75 for all undergraduate coursework. Advanced Standing applicants must have a 3.0 in Social Work courses. The advanced standing program is designed to begin with two bridge courses during the summer semester.

For Standard Program students, a minimum GPA of 2.75 in all undergraduate courses and 3.0 in the last 60 hours coursework is required. Students admitted into the standard program begin their program of study in the Fall semester (which begins in August).

Requests for application are processed electronically through the College of Graduate and Extended Education. Applicants submit their completed applications to the College of Graduate and Extended Education. When files are complete, they are referred to the School of Social Work. The Admissions Coordinator reviews all files for potential admission.

ADMISSION PROCEDURES

The following information is requested from MSW applicants and is specified on the School of Social Work website.

1. A completed application for Graduate Admission for Radford University
2. Official transcripts of ALL undergraduate and graduate work
3. Three letters of recommendation, 1) from field professional, 2) academic, and 3) another academic or professional reference
4. Experience in Human Services Form
5. Curriculum Option/Degree Path Form
6. A personal essay addressing the essay questions found online – 4-page limit
7. A written response to a case study posted online – 2-page limit
8. Current resume
9. Field Practicum Application
10. Legal/Military History form: full explanation of any positive responses

Applicant files are reviewed and rated by at least two full-time graduate social work faculty members. Faculty members are asked to give written feedback in each category as well as overall feedback at the end of the rating form. The application file along with the rating form is then returned to the Admissions Coordinator.

The applicants are rated on:

- overall GPA
- final two-year GPA
- academic preparation
- experience in human services
- personal essay quality/clarity
- content of personal essay
- case study quality/clarity
- references (3 are required)
- suitability for the profession of social work
- full explanation of any legal/military history

The deadline for submission of application materials for all advanced standing applicants is January 31. Students will be notified by March 15 regarding the admission decision.

The suggested date for fullest consideration of all standard program applications is March 1. Applicants who submit all materials before March 1 will be notified by April 15 regarding the admission decision. Standard program applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis after that time.

Full-time applicants interested in applying for a graduate assistantship award are strongly encouraged to apply well in advance of the March 1 deadline and notify the MSW Program Coordinator, devans18@radford.edu, of their interest in an award in January of the year they apply. Please see the Graduate College web-site for more information: <http://www.radford.edu/content/grad/home/cost/assistantships.html>

Standard applicants rated as a top candidate by two raters are sent by the Admissions Coordinator to the MSW Admissions Coordinator and MSW Program Coordinator for admission status within the program. After the requisite program approvals, the file goes to the Graduate College for the final admission decision.

If there is a discrepancy of five points or more between the two faculty raters, and one of the ratings is marginal or weak, the applicant file goes to a third rater. The three scores are then averaged. The points are totaled and the averages used to make decisions regarding further processing of the file. Depending on the average score, the applicant will either: be admitted, denied admission, or staffed by the Coordinator's committee if it continues to be rated as marginal. If an applicant's average rating is marginal, the decision about admission status is referred to the Coordinator's committee for in-depth review and final recommendation. A majority vote by those in attendance makes the final admission decision. The Admissions Coordinator facilitates the meeting and does not vote except to break a tie.

Students are notified by the Graduate College and by the MSW Program regarding admissions decisions. In order to confirm acceptance of an admission offer, students must respond by completing an intent to enroll and sending in a \$500 seat deposit to the Graduate College that will be applied to fall tuition.

An advanced standing applicant follows an identical process, except that, if the applicant is not granted admission to advanced standing, her application will automatically be considered for the standard program.

Readmission Procedures

If a student was enrolled in the RU MSW program and the student left the program for any reason, the student may reapply to the program after the requisite two years imposed by the Graduate College and provide a written explanation as part of the personal essay in the admission application about what provoked the departure and how that issue has been resolved. The student will notify the Admissions Coordinator by email that she/he was applied, and the Admissions Coordinator will forward that application file to all members of the MSW Committee for review and the committee will make the decision about readmission.

Furthermore, if a student was previously enrolled in the RU MSW program and he or she reapplies and is accepted, all courses completed in the MSW program at Radford University with a B or better will be accepted into his or her new program of study, subject to the six-year time limit imposed on program of study completion by the Graduate College.

Standard Program—Radford Campus

The Standard Program curriculum of the MSW Degree requires the completion of 61 credit hours. Courses must be taken in sequence and year-round, allowing full-time students to complete the degree in two academic years plus the summer in-between. Completion of the program requires part-time students to attend four academic years plus two summers in-between. All students commence the program in the Fall semester; there is no mid-year or summer matriculation for the Standard Curriculum students.

Standard Program—Roanoke Campus (Part-Time)

The Roanoke campus offers a hybrid part-time weekend option that allow students to attend all core classes on Saturdays. Classes are held at the Roanoke Higher Education Center; one week in person, the next week online. Students can complete the MSW program in three years (9 semesters, 61 credits) by taking courses in sequence and year-round.

Advanced Standing Program—Radford Campus

The Advanced Standing Curriculum of the Master's Degree program requires the completion of 40 credit hours. Courses must also be taken in sequence and year-round, allowing full-time students to complete the degree in four semesters and part-time students to complete the program in six semesters. Advanced Standing students enter the program in the summer semester with Bridge courses.

Conditional Admission

Students may be admitted on a conditional basis if they are lacking some admissions requirements or prerequisite coursework but are otherwise qualified for admission. They may be required to take courses before admission. If students are permitted to begin their course of study, they have one semester to complete the requirements, including prerequisite courses.

Temporary Admission

Students may be admitted on a Temporary basis if they meet all the requirements of the department and the Graduate College but the bachelor's degree has not been conferred at the time of admission. An official transcript must be received within 30 days of the start of the term of initial enrollment. Non-compliance with this policy results in dismissal. Temporary students will not qualify for financial aid until the official transcript is received.

ADVANCED STANDING AND TRANSFER CREDITS

Advanced Standing

Students who are graduates of baccalaureate social work programs accredited by the Council on Social Work Education may be admitted to the Advanced Standing Program if the BSW was completed no more than 7 years prior to application for admission to the MSW Program. Advanced standing status is not awarded automatically due to the competitive nature of the program and limited slots available. Applicants are required to meet the admissions criteria; however, strong applicants generally exceed the minimum requirements. They must have a minimum GPA of 3.0 in all undergraduate courses and 3.2 in social work courses. All advanced standing students enter in summer semester and are required to successfully complete two three credit transition courses.

Applicants who do not meet admission requirements for the advanced standing program will be evaluated for possible admission to the standard program.

Following successful completion of SOWK 678 and SOWK 679, defined as receiving a B or better in both classes, Advanced Standing Students follow the same curriculum as offered to all concentration-level students in the full-time or part-time program. A student who earns a B- or C in either Bridge course, may be considered for admission into the Standard Program, if desired.

Transfer of Credit from another MSW Program

With the approval of the MSW Coordinator, a student may have up to 20 foundation year graduate credits (see the RU Graduate College Catalog) recognized from an accredited social work program to apply toward their official program of study. These courses must have been taken no more than 6 years prior to applying for graduation. Only social work courses from an accredited MSW program can be used to substitute for the required coursework in the program. Courses must be comparable to the Radford University MSW Program and must have been completed with a grade of B or better. Coursework offered towards graduation with an MSW must have been completed within the past 6 years. Credit for courses earned by correspondence, by examination, or by extension at other institutions is not accepted. Only first year MSW courses can be transferred; second year courses must be completed in the Radford University School of Social Work. Students transferring in MSW foundation credits may be required to take the advanced standing bridge course.

Transfer of Elective Credit

With the approval of the MSW Coordinator, at admissions, students may transfer in up to six electives graduate credits outside the School or University. The coursework must have been completed no more than 6 years before date of graduation with a grade of B or better. Credit for courses earned by correspondence, by examination, or by extension at other institutions is not accepted.

Life Experience

Students are not given credit for life experience, including practice experience.

GRE

Students who are concerned that they may be denied admission due to a GPA close to the minimum set by the Graduate College, but who have the potential to become professional social workers, may take the GRE to help illustrate their academic potential. Students are also encouraged to take additional undergraduate courses in order to demonstrate their academic potential.

Waiver by Examination

Waiver by examination provides a mechanism for students to demonstrate knowledge they have acquired through previous educational experiences. Students who have been accepted into the MSW Program are given the opportunity to test out of four courses: SOWK 601: Human Behavior and the Social Environment I; SOWK 602: Human Behavior and the Social Environment II; SOWK 611: Social Welfare Policy I; SOWK 621: Basic Research Methodology

Passing these examinations does not provide credits toward the degree (sixty-one credit hours); however, it does allow students to take extra electives. Students cannot challenge a course that has already begun nor can they challenge a course they have already completed. A passing grade of "B" or better on the challenge examination will be recorded as a "P" on the transcript. Unsuccessful attempts at challenge examinations will not be recorded on the transcript and may not be repeated.

Two challenge exam dates will be offered; the second Wednesday of August for SOWK 601 & SOWK 611; and the second Wednesday in January for SOWK 602 & SOWK 621. Students will have 3 hours to complete each exam. No study aids, books, notes, computers, calculators, cell phones or other internet-capable devices may be present during testing. Students will be held to the RU Honor Code. Notification of test results will be made by email after five business days.

Applications are available from the MSW Program Coordinator upon admission to the program. Deadline to apply is the last day of July prior to the fall semester of admission for the fall semester exams and the last day of fall semester (prior to exam week) for the spring semester exams.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES

<http://www.radford.edu/dro/>

No otherwise qualified student shall, on the basis of disability, be subjected to discrimination or excluded from participation in the Waldron College. A student with a disability may be protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and be eligible for reasonable accommodations that will provide an equal opportunity to meet the academic criteria related to professional behavior and scholastic performance. It is important to note that Waldron College Departments and disciplines have published technical standards that must be met to ensure the health, welfare, and safety of clients in various field settings; these standards may affect accommodation.

Any otherwise qualified student with a protected disability who requests a reasonable accommodation must notify the Radford University Disability Resource Office (DRO) and provide documentation as needed. The DRO makes recommendations for accommodations. It is the student's responsibility to contact the DRO and to propose accommodation requests to the appropriate instructor and School Director. The Schools within the Waldron College will review issues of appropriateness and accommodation. An initial assessment, subsequent plan, use of outside experts (including the DRO), and periodic checks between the Schools of the Waldron College and the student are appropriate courses of action in making accommodations.

Accommodation requires a signed agreement with the faculty member that is appropriate and does not compromise standards of behavior required for success in the professional discipline.

LIVE TEXT

LiveText is an assessment system that has been adopted by over 500 universities across the country. It is a very valuable technology tool that provides you with a powerful way to access, assess, and document your own efforts. There are a number of benefits for students including:

- Tools for Enhanced Organization and Productivity
- Unlimited File Storage Capabilities
- Access to Digital Resources and Course Management Tools
- Development of Personalized e-Portfolios

LiveText is provided through a private vendor and it was selected based on (1) the quality of assistance the LiveText company can provide in implementing the system, (2) the quality of support services for students, and (3) the opportunities for students to create and maintain portfolios as a professional tool after leaving RU. We believe the portability and long-term usefulness of LiveText will be a strong benefit to both our programs and students. It will support faculty efforts to evaluate the program on an on-going basis.

LiveText works on a system where students make a one-time purchase for membership, good for up to five years. Once you have purchased a membership for one course, you will not need to purchase it again. All students enrolled in the MSW Program are required to purchase this membership. There will be required performance assessments at specified points in your academic career.

More specific information will be provided during the MSW Program Orientation.

RETENTION IN THE MSW PROGRAM

A number of concerns may arise regarding student behavior and performance while a student in the MSW program. The procedures for addressing these concerns conform to the general guidelines set forth in the *Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice Education*. The procedures described below are more specific than those found in the *Waldron College Standards*.

A graduate student shall be terminated from the MSW program if any of the following occurs:

1. Receipt of a C grade in any two graduate courses;
2. Receipt of a grade below C in any single graduate course;
3. Failure to adhere to the Radford University *Honor Code*, the Radford University *Standards of Student Conduct*, or the *Waldron College Standards for Professional Practice Education*; or
4. Failure to adhere to the *Code of Ethics* of the National Association of Social Workers.

REVIEW OF PROFESSIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The professional and ethical performance of students is a highly valued component of the Social Work program. It will be assessed in accordance with Radford University policies, Waldron College Standards of Professional Practice Education and the National Association of Social Workers' Code of Ethics. Violations of ethical or behavioral standards are considered serious issues and indicate that a student cannot meet the expectations to work as a social work practitioner. Repeated, serious, or unresolved problems may result in sanctions up to and including student dismissal from the MSW program.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

All concerns are addressed through the following 3-stage process. The MSW Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the entire process; therefore, all questions about the procedures should be addressed to the MSW Coordinator.

Stage 1: Informal remediation

The student will be informed of the concerns by the field instructor, field liaison, or the course instructor. The instructor or liaison will document the concerns and how they were communicated to the student. In most cases, the concern will be resolved at this level and no further action will be necessary.

Stage 2: Formal remediation

This stage is engaged if informal remediation is unsuccessful. Stage 2 is automatically engaged for students who receive a grade of C in any graduate course. Stage 2 is also engaged for concerns involving the violation of codes of ethics or behavior, unless the MSW Committee determines that the case should proceed immediately to Stage 3. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty may additionally be referred to the University's Conduct Board.

Stage 2 requires the development of a formal remediation plan that provides the student the opportunity to address the concern or correct the problem. For field placement concerns, the field liaison and field instructor must be involved in developing the remediation plan. For all other concerns, the course instructor, the student, advisor, and the MSW Coordinator must be involved. The involved parties must devise a written plan of remediation that is agreed to and signed by all parties. The remediation plan must include clear consequences if the student does not adhere to the agreement. If the parties cannot agree on a remediation plan, the matter will be presented to the MSW Committee for action.

The MSW Coordinator must document the specific concerns and the remediation plan. The Field Coordinator must also be informed if the concern relates to field, and the Site Coordinator must be informed if the student is an extended campus student. A copy of the signed agreement will be maintained in the student's academic file.

Stage 3: Dismissal from the MSW program

This stage will be engaged under the following circumstances:

- Receipt of a grade of C in any two graduate courses;
- Receipt of a grade below C in any graduate course;
- Remediation plan set forth in Stage 2 is violated or is not successfully completed;
- More than 2 concerns reach Stage 2; or

- Serious violations of applicable codes of ethics and behavior.

The MSW Coordinator and the student's advisor are involved in all cases that reach Stage 3. The Field Coordinator and Site Coordinator are also involved, if the concern involves field or an extended campus student.

If Stage 3 is reached due to academic performance (i.e., two grades of C or one grade below C), the student will be dismissed from the MSW program. The MSW Coordinator will notify the student of this action in writing and will also notify the student of the available appeals procedures. In accordance with the Graduate College policies, students who have been dismissed from any graduate program are not eligible for readmission to the Graduate College until at least two years following their dismissal. Students wishing to apply for readmission to the MSW program must follow the regular admissions process.

If Stage 3 is reached for any reason other than academic performance, the following procedures for dismissal from the MSW program will be followed.

1. The MSW Coordinator will notify the student, in writing, that they face dismissal from the MSW program. This notice will cite the specific provisions the policy or policies that the student is alleged to have violated. Regardless of the nature of the charges, the student may not accrue any hours toward any field placement until the process is completed. The student may continue to attend classes unless directed otherwise by the MSW Coordinator in writing.
2. The student may submit a written response to the charge within 10 classroom days to the MSW Coordinator. Faculty, field liaisons, and other individuals directly related to the case will also be asked to submit written reports within 10 classroom days. These statements will be made available to the MSW Committee.
3. The MSW Coordinator will schedule a meeting of the MSW Committee to be held no less than 10 classroom days but no more than 20 classroom days after the initial letter is sent to the student. The MSW Coordinator will inform the student, advisor, MSW Committee members, and any other relevant parties of the date and time of the meeting. The MSW Coordinator serves as Chair of this meeting.

The student may elect to have present a faculty advisor, who may privately counsel the student but may not address the Committee or question witnesses. No party may be represented by legal counsel at these proceedings. Only individuals having direct knowledge of the alleged violation(s) may appear before the Committee. Members of the Committee must be present at the hearing in order to vote. Minutes of the hearing must be kept and will become part of the record. The hearing proceeds as follows:

- a. The Chair calls the meeting to order. All those present for the meeting introduce themselves and indicate their roles in the proceedings. The Chair asks one member of the MSW Committee to take notes. The Chair reminds everyone present that all participants are bound by the Radford University Honor Code and asks for the verbal assurance of each that he or she will uphold the Honor Code.

The Chair then states the purpose of the meeting and briefly explains the procedure.

- b. Any witnesses present are dismissed from the room. They are asked to remain available outside the room to be called on as needed. The only people remaining in the room are the MSW Committee members, the student, and the student's faculty advisor (if requested by the student).
- c. The Chair will read the initial charges against the student and will summarize the evidence presented to support the charges.

The Committee members may ask questions of the student.

- d. The student may call upon his or her witnesses, one at a time. Witnesses are questioned by the Committee. The student may also ask questions of the witnesses if they wish to do so. Each witness is thanked and dismissed before the next witness is called in.
 - e. The MSW Coordinator may call upon her or his witnesses, one at a time. Witnesses are questioned by the Committee. The student may also ask questions of the witnesses if they wish to do so. Each witness is thanked and dismissed before the next witness is called in.
 - f. The MSW Coordinator is given the opportunity to make a brief final statement that summarizes his or her position supporting dismissal from the MSW program.
 - g. The student is given the opportunity to make a brief final statement that summarizes his or her position that dismissal from the MSW program is not warranted.
 - h. The Chair asks everyone to leave the room except the members of the MSW Committee. The student is informed that they will be notified in writing within three classroom days of the Committee's decision.
 - i. The Committee deliberates and reaches a decision.
 - 1. If a majority of committee members present vote in favor of dismissal, the MSW Committee will formally recommend that the student be dismissed from the MSW program.
 - 2. In all other cases, the MSW Committee will not recommend dismissal from the MSW program.
 - j. The Chair adjourns the hearing.
4. The Chair of the MSW Committee will inform the student, the Director of the School of Social Work, the Dean of Waldron College, and the Dean of the Graduate College of the MSW Committee's decision. Such notice must be made in writing and within 3

classroom days of the hearing. Copies of all documents reviewed and minutes of all Committee proceedings will also be included.

STUDENT APPEAL PROCEDURES

Students have the right to appeal decisions made about their progress in the MSW program using appropriate mechanisms. Students should consult their advisor regarding the proper procedure to follow.

Student Grade Appeal: Student grade appeals will be heard by the Grade Appeals Committee of the School of Social Work according to the Graduate Grade Appeals Procedures. This process is used if the student feels that he or she was treated unfairly; it should not be used merely because the student does not like the grade he or she received. The procedures and related forms can be obtained from the Graduate College website at:
<http://www.radford.edu/content/dam/colleges/cgps/PDF/gradeappeal.pdf>

Graduate Student Grievance Procedure

Students may appeal program decisions other than course grades. This process is used if the student feels he or she was treated unfairly; it should not be used merely because the student does not like the outcome of the process. Students have the opportunity to grieve a decision made by the MSW program (by the MSW Coordinator, the MSW Committee, or the Field Committee) by following the procedures stated below.

Informal Grievance Resolution Process

The student must begin the grievance process by contacting the university employee (for a concern about a particular person) or the MSW coordinator (for a concern about a programmatic decision) in an attempt to resolve the disagreement in an informal and cooperative atmosphere. This discussion should take place within 10 classroom days after the experience of concern or notification of the decision in question. The MSW Committee and the School of Social Work believe that this is the preferred way of resolving problems and that most issues can be addressed through an informal process of mutually respectful discussion. If the student and employee/MSW Coordinator are unable to reach a satisfactory resolution, the student may begin the formal grievance process.

Formal Grievance Resolution Process

1. Following the failure to reach resolution through the informal grievance resolution process and not later than one month after the attempt at informal resolution failed, the student must complete the "Notice of Intent to File a Formal Grievance" form. The form is available on the College of Graduate and Professional Studies webpage. The student initiates the process by submitting the form to the Director of the School of Social Work. On the form, the student will be asked to
 - verify that he or she has been unsuccessful in reaching a resolution through the informal grievance resolution process;
 - precisely and specifically state the reasons for the grievance; and

- offer suggestions as to what the student would consider a fair resolution of the grievance (note that this must focus on the process associated with a decision, not the decision itself), with supporting reason(s).

After all signatures are obtained, copies of the form will be distributed to the student and the other parties involved.

2. If the grievance involves a specific person in the School of Social Work, the university employee in question will be asked to submit a written response to the Director of the School of Social Work (or to the Graduate Dean if the Director is named in the grievance) and to the student within five classroom days of receipt of the grievance. If the grievance involves a programmatic decision, the MSW Coordinator will be asked to submit a written response to the Director (or to the Graduate Dean if the Director is named in the grievance) and to the student within ten classroom days of receipt of the grievance.

The Director of the School of Social Work (or the Graduate Dean if the Director is named in the grievance) will attempt to resolve the appeal within ten additional classroom days through conferencing with the employee/MSW Coordinator and student. If not resolved within ten classroom days, the Director will request in writing to the SSW (School of Social Work) Graduate Student Grievance Committee that the Committee consider the grievance, and the procedures of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee will be followed. (If the Director is named in the grievance, the Graduate Dean will request in writing to the Graduate College Grievance Committee that the Committee consider the grievance, and the procedures of the Graduate College Grievance Committee will thereafter be followed.)

The personnel committee in the School of Social Work serves as the Graduate Student Grievance Committee. A quorum for decisions of the Committee is two-thirds or more of the members.

3. The student appellant and the employee/MSW Coordinator involved may submit additional brief written summaries of the evidence regarding the process that was followed in making the decision to the chair of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee within ten classroom days after the Director notifies the Committee that a formal appeal has been filed. The student has the right to consult with a School of Social Work faculty member of the student's choice. The faculty member may also attend the appeal hearing if one is conducted. Based upon the evidence presented and any additional evidence requested by the Committee, the Committee will meet to decide if there are grounds for a hearing regarding the process that was followed. Minutes of the meeting must be kept and copies of any evidence presented shall become part of the record.
 - If the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee decides by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present that there are grounds for a hearing, a formal hearing will be scheduled not sooner than ten and not later than twenty classroom days after the notice of a hearing is given to the employee/MSW Coordinator and the student.

- If the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee decides by a majority vote at a meeting at which a quorum is present that there are no grounds for a hearing, the grievance goes to step 5 of the process, and, if certified, the grievance process ends.

In either case, the student and the employee/MSW Coordinator shall be notified in writing within two classroom days of the Committee's decision. Copies of the minutes of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee meeting shall accompany the notification of the decision. Should a hearing be necessary, the Committee chair will notify in writing the student and the employee/MSW Coordinator at least five class days prior to the hearing date. The SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee cannot find in favor of the student without a full hearing as described in the next step.

4. If a hearing is to be held, the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee will conduct the hearing at which both the student and the involved employee/MSW Coordinator must be present. The student may also elect to have present a faculty advisor, who may privately counsel the student but may not address the Committee or question witnesses. Neither party may be represented by legal counsel at these proceedings. In the event that either the student or the employee/MSW Coordinator is absent at the time of the appeal as a result of illness, resignation, or any other reason found valid by the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee, the Committee may delay the hearing until a more appropriate time. If the Committee determines that the reason is not valid, the Committee may proceed with the hearing and notify the absent party(ies) that a full hearing was held in his/her/their absence. The employee/MSW Coordinator and student shall place all available pertinent evidence regarding the process that was followed in the hands of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee. Access to work/experience of other students must protect the privacy rights of the students either by requiring permission of the students or through having their names redacted. Members of the Committee must be present at the hearing in order to be eligible to vote. Minutes of the hearing must be kept. The hearing should proceed as follows:
 - The Chair of the MSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee calls the hearing to order. All those present for the hearing introduce themselves and indicate their roles in the hearing. The Chair points out that one member of the Committee will be taking notes. The Chair reminds all present that all participants are bound by the Radford University Honor Code and asks for the verbal assurance of each that he or she will uphold the honor code. The Chair then states the purpose of the hearing, emphasizing that the focus is on the decision-making process, not the decision itself, and briefly explains the procedure.
 - Any witnesses present are dismissed from the hearing room. They are asked to remain available outside the room, to be called upon as needed.
 - As is usual in academic debate, the individual bringing the grievance has the opportunity to speak first and last. Because the student maintains the burden of proof to demonstrate that a change is justified, he or she will give the initial opening statement and the final closing statement.

- The student makes a statement about the reason(s) for the grievance. This statement should be limited to the reason(s) included on the "Intent to File a Formal Grievance" form, emphasizing the concerns about the process followed.
- The employee/MSW Coordinator makes a statement stating his or her position as to why the process associated with the interaction/decision was appropriate.
- Members of the Committee may direct questions, first to the student and then to the employee/MSW Coordinator regarding the process used. The employee/MSW Coordinator has the opportunity to ask questions of the student, and the student may ask questions of the employee/MSW Coordinator.
- The student may call upon his or her witnesses, one at a time. Witnesses are questioned by the Committee regarding the process used. The employee/MSW Coordinator may also ask questions of the witnesses if he or she wishes to do so. Each witness is thanked and dismissed.
- The employee/MSW Coordinator may call upon his or her witnesses, one at a time. Witnesses are questioned by the Committee regarding the process used. The student may also ask questions of the witnesses if he or she chooses to do so. Each witness is thanked and dismissed.
- The employee/MSW Coordinator is given the opportunity to make a brief final statement that summarizes his or her position that the original process associated with the interaction/decision was appropriate.
- The student is given the opportunity to make a brief final statement that summarizes his or her position that the grievance is warranted because of the concerns about the process that was followed.
- The Chair asks everyone to leave the hearing room except the members of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee. The student and the employee/MSW Coordinator are informed that they will be notified in writing within 3 classroom days of the Committee's decision. They are also informed that the Committee's decision is final and may not be appealed, except on procedural grounds
- The Committee deliberates and reaches a decision. The Chair dismisses the hearing.

One of three outcomes may result from the hearing:

- If three-fifths or more of the members of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee present and voting (excluding abstentions) vote in favor of the student's position regarding the process followed, the chair of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee shall so inform the employee/MSW Coordinator by written memorandum, with copies to the student and the Director of the School of Social Work. The issue shall be referred back to the appropriate School of Social Work committee or employee to review the process associated with the position/decision, taking into account what was discussed by the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee. That review must begin within 5 classroom days of receipt of the notice from the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee.
- If the majority but less than three-fifths of the members of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee present and voting (excluding abstentions) vote in favor of the student, the chair of the Committee shall so inform the

employee/MSW Coordinator by written memorandum, recommending that the process associated with the position/decision be reviewed, with copies to the student and the Director of the School of Social Work. If the employee/MSW Coordinator chooses to re-review the position/decision, such a process must begin within 5 classroom days of receipt of the notice from the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee. If the employee/MSW Coordinator chooses not to review the position/decision, no review shall be mandated.

- If less than a majority of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee members present and voting (excluding abstentions) vote in favor of the student's position regarding the process followed, no recommendation regarding conducting a review will be given. The chair of the Committee shall so inform the student, with copies to the employee/MSW Coordinator and the Director of the School of Social Work. The written memorandum shall be transmitted within 5 classroom days of the hearing and shall include a description of the process followed from informal appeals through the hearing decision, copies of all materials presented, and a copy of the minutes of the hearing.
5. The Director of the School of Social Work shall review the process, all related materials, and hearing minutes within 5 classroom days of the receipt of all materials.
- If the Director certifies that the procedures were followed, the grievance is completed. No further appeals or grievances may be pursued.
 - If the Director finds substantive errors in the process that she or he believes could have reasonably altered the decision reached by the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee, reconsideration by a SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee made up of entirely different members shall be initiated by the Director. The reconsideration shall begin at step 4 of the process.

In either case, the Director shall advise all parties of the outcome of the process review within 3 classroom days of completing said review. The Director cannot reverse or revise the decision of the SSW Graduate Student Grievance Committee but can only send it to a second committee for reconsideration based upon procedural errors.

This decision will be final within the School of Social Work.

Graduate students may only grieve the process undertaken to arrive at a decision at the Graduate College level. For more information:

<http://www.radford.edu/content/dam/colleges/cgps/PDF/GrievanceProcedures.pdf>