



**MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK**

**2009-10 ADMISSION INFORMATION**

**AND**

**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

*(To begin study in 2010)*



**Department of Social Work**  
**Minnesota State University, Mankato**  
**Mankato, MN 56001**

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This document is available in alternative formats to individuals with disabilities by contacting the Department of Social Work at 507-389-6504 or 800-627-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).

October 1, 2009

Dear MSW Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Applying to this program is a serious professional decision and we applaud you for taking this step. In this document you will find the information and forms needed to apply to this program. It is in your best interest to begin the process well in advance of the application deadline of **January 31, 2010**. We anticipate admitting about 15 new graduate students into the Traditional (2-year) MSW program and 15 students into the Advanced Standing MSW program. In the past couple years we have had many more applicants than we have places available.

The application to the MSW program has two parts, both which must be completed by the deadline:

- A. The **Application to Graduate Studies** at Minnesota State University, Mankato, which goes directly to the College of Graduate Studies and Research, and
- B. The **MSW Application**, which comes directly to the Department of Social Work.

We recommend that you take the following steps to ensure a successful application process:

- 1) Read the MSW Admissions Information and Application Forms carefully to learn about program requirements and also visit the Department's website - <http://sbs.mnsu.edu/socialwork/graduate/>. Complete policies for the program can be found in the MSW Graduate Student Handbook, also on our website.
- 2) Visit the College of Graduate Studies and Research website - <http://grad.mnsu.edu/applying/> - to find the Application for Graduate Study, as well as University policies and other information.
- 3) Review all application forms carefully, making note of any questions or concerns, and contact the MSW Program Director for clarification if necessary.
- 4) Complete all parts of the applications, including preparing and gathering supporting documents.
- 5) Make and keep a copy of all application materials for your own files.
- 6) Send BOTH sets of application forms and documents to the appropriate offices postmarked or hand delivered **NO LATER THAN January 31, 2010**.

We look forward to reading your application to find out more about you and your desire to obtain the MSW degree. Please recognize, however, that we will not be able to admit everyone who applies to the program due to the enrollment limits of the program. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Nancy Fitzsimons, the MSW Program Director via email [[nancy.fitzsimons@mnsu.edu](mailto:nancy.fitzsimons@mnsu.edu)] or phone 507-389-6504.

Sincerely,

*Faculty of the Department of Social Work*

## **Department Mission**

The Department of Social Work at Minnesota State University, Mankato promotes learning to prepare students to become social workers who practice with competence and integrity at the generalist (BSSW) and advanced generalist (MSW) levels. The Department supports and enhances the work of social service agencies through consultation, scholarship, research, leadership, and other service activities. The Department affirms its commitment to practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, with an emphasis on small and rural communities, by enhancing human well-being, promoting social justice, and alleviating poverty and oppression for all members of our diverse society within its global context.

## **MSW Program Description**

The Department of Social Work offers a Master of Social Work (MSW) program focusing on Advanced Generalist Social Work practice, including a concentration year emphasis on practice in small communities and rural areas. The program prepares students for advanced direct and in-direct practice. Students achieve program objectives through foundation and concentration coursework, extensive field work, and a final capstone project. (There is no thesis requirement.) The program is in candidacy for accreditation from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Upon attaining accreditation, students completing the program will be eligible for advanced generalist social work licensure in Minnesota. Provisions are in place for students to obtain temporary licenses in Minnesota in the intervening time.

## **Advanced Generalist Practice Definition**

The MSW Program is founded on the use of appropriate assessment skills at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels that allow a differential application of advanced knowledge, skills, and values in advanced generalist practice. While the MSW program will prepare practitioners for any practice environment, special emphasis will be placed on small and rural communities.

### **The advanced generalist curriculum:**

- Builds on a generalist foundation and integrates advanced knowledge, theories, skills, values and ethics;
- Increases the depth and breadth for practice from a multi-method, multi-level, and theoretically sound perspective;
- Supports interventions occurring at micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- Emphasizes the provision of social work services in the small and rural community context;
- Provides the capacity for independent evidence-based practice, and;
- Provides for the enhancement of the profession through research and evaluation at all levels of practice.

### **The advanced generalist practitioner:**

- Is prepared to meet the needs of all clients;
- Focuses on ethical practice that ranges from direct practice with individuals, families and groups through indirect practice in organizational administration and change, policy development, and community practice, and;
- Is prepared to assume leadership on both direct and indirect practice settings.

## MSW Program Goals and Objectives

The Department of Social Work has adopted the following goals and objectives for the Master of Social Work program based in large part on the Council on Social Work Education requirements stipulated in the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards and on the unique focus of our program. *[NOTE: The letter "C" following an objective number indicates that this objective is related to the Concentration Year (second year) of the program curriculum.]*

**1. To prepare competent and effective graduates to be advanced generalist social work practitioners with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities, emphasizing the small and rural community context.**

**1.1-**Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.

**1.2-**Apply the knowledge and skills of a generalist social work perspective to micro, mezzo and macro practice.

**1.3-**At micro, mezzo, and macro levels evaluate research studies, apply research findings to practice, and evaluate practice interventions.

**1.4-**Practice without discrimination, with respect, and with knowledge and skills related to clients' age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.

**1.5-**Use communication skills differentially across client populations, colleagues, and communities.

**1.6-**Function within the structure of organizations and service delivery systems.

**1.7-**Use supervision and consultation appropriate to social work practice.

**1.8C-**Apply critical thinking skills to differentially analyze both direct and indirect practice situations.

**1.9C-**Develop, implement, and evaluate theoretically-grounded, evidence-based interventions within the context of the practice setting.

**1.10C-**Develop skills and differentially apply strategies for effective leadership in both direct and indirect practice.

**2. To prepare graduates who apply and promote, at an advanced level, the values, ethics, theories, and perspectives of the social work profession.**

**2.1-**Understand and interpret the history and contemporary structures and issues of the social work profession.

**2.2-**Understand and apply frameworks and theories of human behavior in the social environment supported by empirical evidence.

**2.3-**Understand and apply the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles.

**2.4C-**Critically analyze values and ethics for application in complex and ambiguous practice situations, emphasizing the small and rural community context.

**2.5C-**Critically analyze and apply frameworks and theories for an understanding of rural perspectives and system interactions.

**3. To prepare graduates who promote, at an advanced level, social and economic justice in a diverse society within a global context.**

**3.1**-Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply social change strategies that advance local, national, and global social and economic justice.

**3.2** –Understand and analyze social welfare policies and issues within their historic and contemporary contexts.

**3.3C**-Critically analyze policy issues impacting small and rural communities.

**3.4C**-Identify and respond to the need for developing and improving social welfare policy at the agency, local, national and global levels, emphasizing small and rural areas.

**4. To promote scholarship, professional development, and community involvement of faculty and graduates within the local, region, state, and global communities.**

**4.1**-Contribute to the profession through scholarship that advances the social work profession and the provision of social welfare services.

**4.2**-Engage in service that enhances societal well-being.

**4.3**-Participate in ongoing development of professional skills and knowledge.

## MSW Admission Criteria

In addition to meeting the general admission requirements of the Minnesota State University, Mankato, College of Graduate Studies and Research, applicants must meet the admission requirements of either the Traditional MSW program or Advanced Standing MSW program. Admission decisions will be based on a range of information, including the qualifications described below, as well as the applicant's fit with the program. Admission to the program presumes the applicant's ability and willingness to follow the specific sequential curriculum outlined in the Program Requirements. Students who are admitted will be required to enroll in the full-time curriculum as it is described in these materials. Refer to the Application Form for complete details and instructions.

### **Criteria for admission to the Traditional MSW Program (60-credits, 2-years)**

*(See further details and instructions on the Application and Recommendation Forms.)*

#### *Required criteria:*

1. *Prior Degree.* Students accepted for the MSW program must have completed a baccalaureate (e.g., BA, BS) degree in any major reflecting a liberal arts foundation from an accredited college or university. In addition, applicants' transcripts will be reviewed to see they have completed basic liberal arts foundation including 21 semester credit hours in the social and/or behavioral sciences, as well as courses in human biology and statistical analysis.
2. *GPA.* Applicants should have strong academic credentials as demonstrated by an undergraduate GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale. Students with less than a 3.0 may be considered for admission if they have demonstrated high performance in post-baccalaureate coursework.
3. *Course Prerequisites.* Applicants must have completed a college-level course with content in human biology and a college-level course in statistical analysis with a grade of "C" or higher **before** beginning the first semester of study in the MSW program.
4. *Recommendations.* Applicants must submit three **professional or academic** (not personal) recommendation forms with letters from persons who can address the applicant's academic abilities, professional skills, potential for graduate education, **and** potential for advanced professional social work practice. It is preferred, though not required, that one recommendation be from an academic advisor or instructor.
5. *Professional Statement.* Applicants must submit a well-written professional statement in which they reflect upon qualities and characteristics that are consistent with the core values of the social work profession, a commitment to culturally competent social work practice, motivation to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for culturally competent advanced generalist social work practice within a rural community context, evidence of leadership as reflected through professional experiences, and specific professional goals consistent with the mission and goals of the MSW program.

#### *Human/Social Service Experience:*

6. *Human/Social Service Experience.* Paid work experience, significant unpaid internship and/or volunteer experience in human/social services will be considered in making admission decisions.

## **Criteria for admission to the Advanced Standing MSW Program (32-credits, 1-year)**

*See further details and instructions on the Application and Recommendation Forms.*

*Required criteria:*

1. *Bachelor's Degree in Social Work.* Applicants to the Advanced Standing option must hold a Bachelor in Social Work (BSW, BSSW) degree or other Bachelor's degree (BS or BA) with a major in social work from a CSWE accredited program at the time of enrollment. Such a program must have included a supervised undergraduate field practicum consistent with CSWE standards.
2. *GPA.* Applicants should have strong academic preparation as demonstrated by an overall undergraduate GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale. Students also should have strong academic preparation in generalist social work practice as demonstrated by an undergraduate social work GPA of 3.00 on a 4-point scale. Students with less than a 3.0 may be considered for admission if they have demonstrated high performance in post-baccalaureate coursework.
3. *Course Prerequisites.* Applicants must have completed a college-level course with content in human biology and a college-level course in statistical analysis with a grade of "C" or higher **before** beginning the first semester of study in the MSW program.
4. *Recommendations.* Applicants must submit three **professional or academic** (not personal) recommendation forms with letters from persons who can address the applicant's academic abilities, professional skills, potential for graduate education, **and** potential for advanced professional social work practice. It is preferred, though not required, that one recommendation be from an academic advisor or instructor.
5. *Professional Statement.* Applicants must submit a well-written professional statement in which they reflect upon qualities and characteristics that are consistent with the core values of the social work profession, a commitment to culturally competent social work practice, motivation to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for culturally competent advanced generalist social work practice within a rural community context, evidence of leadership as reflected through professional experiences, and specific professional goals consistent with the mission and goals of the MSW program.

*Human/Social Service Experience:*

6. *Human/Social Service Experience.* Paid work experience, significant unpaid internship and/or volunteer experience in human/social services will be considered in making admission decisions.

### **Evaluation of Applications**

The MSW Program Director reviews all applications for completeness and basic requirements for the program. Once complete, applications are reviewed by the MSW Admissions Committee comprised of three MSW faculty members. Committee members independently review each file and score the recommendations, professional statements, and human/social service experience. Required criteria for admission are considered as follows: 1) applicant's previous GPA accounts for about 20%, 2) three recommendations account for a total of 40%, and 3) professional statement accounts for 40% of the initial score. Human/social services, social work, and other experiences are considered secondarily. The Committee meets to make admissions decisions based upon the application materials, compatibility with the program's mission and goals, unique contributions, and the limits of cohort size. This process is competitive; not all applicants will be admitted. Applicants may also be placed on a waiting list if there are more qualified applicants than we have space.

## Policies Relevant to Applicants

NOTE: Complete policies and procedures can be found in the MSW Graduate Student Handbook.

### *Policy on Credit for Past Experience*

Though previous social service experiences and past internships are evaluated as part of the admissions process, no course credit can be given to any student in the MSW program for either previous life experience or previous work or internships experience as is stipulated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). This includes any previous practicum or internship hours in other programs.

### *Policy on Course Transfer and Substitution*

Transfer credits may be accepted in accordance with the policies of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at Minnesota State University, Mankato. To be accepted as part of a degree program, transfer credit must have been completed no more than six years prior to the award of the MSW degree; generally no more than four or five years before beginning your course of study in the MSW program.

The MSW program may accept up to 10 transfer credits from either a:

- CSWE accredited MSW program for foundation year courses, or
- CSWE accredited MSW program or other graduate program in a related field for elective course credit.

Transfer credit will not be awarded for practice courses, required concentration year courses, or for field education hours. Transfer credits may be awarded based upon a case-by-case review of each comparable course syllabus to ensure the course meets the objectives of the MSW program foundation or approved elective courses and has comparable content, readings, and requirements.

### *Policy on Prerequisite Undergraduate Courses*

Evaluation of applicant's past academic credits and GPA is conducted by review of college and university transcripts submitted to the College of Graduate Studies and Research, which are copied to the MSW Program Director. Applicant's transcripts must show that the applicant has completed or will complete **prior to beginning** the first semester of the MSW program at least 21 semester credit hours in the social and behavioral sciences. This designation includes courses in anthropology, economics, corrections, criminal justice, geography, history, human services, political science, psychology, sociology, social work, urban studies, education, and women's studies. Students must also have successfully completed, passing with a grade of "C" or better, a course with substantial human biology content and a course in statistical analysis. A variety of courses may meet these criteria. If you need additional assistance, please contact the MSW Program Director.

## MSW Program Degree Requirements

To complete the MSW degree once admitted, students must fulfill the requirements of the program into which they are admitted, including following the required full-time plan of study outlined in the table below. The Traditional MSW program requires 60-credits, while the Advanced Standing MSW program requires 32-credits. There is *no part-time option* available. The required MSW courses listed below will meet on Fridays and/or Saturdays, and are offered only once per year. The schedule for electives is set by each department, usually on other days of the week.

Traditional MSW Foundation Year (1 <sup>st</sup> Year) (30 credits)	Traditional MSW Concentration Year (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year) (30 credits) & Advanced Standing Program Year (32 credits)
<p><i>NOTES: Applicants must complete any prerequisites prior to beginning their MSW coursework. Elective courses (3-credits are required) may be taken whenever a student chooses to put them in their schedule. Generally this would be summer or fall of the second or concentration year of the program.**</i></p>	
<p><b>Fall Semester</b>            601: Foundations of Generalist Practice I (3)            603: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (3)            605: Social Welfare Policy and Services (3)            607: Professional Competence Seminar I (2)</p> <p><b>Spring Semester</b>            611: Foundations of Generalist Practice II (3)            613: Human Behavior in the Social Environment II (3)            615: Foundation Practicum &amp; Seminar I (5)</p> <p><b>Summer Semester</b>            629: Applied Social Work Research (3)            625: Foundation Practicum &amp; Seminar II (5)</p>	<p><b>Summer Semester</b>            650 Advanced Standing Preparation Seminar (2)*</p> <p><b>Fall Semester</b>            651: Adv. Social Work Practice with Individuals (3)            657: Professional Competence Seminar II (2)            669: Advanced Social Work Evaluation (3)</p> <p><b>Spring Semester</b>            655: Social Welfare Policy Practice (3)            660: Adv. SW Practice with Couples, Families &amp; Groups (3)            665: Advanced Practicum and Seminar I (5)</p> <p><b>Summer Semester</b>            661: Adv. Social Work Practice Administration (3)            675: Advanced Practicum and Seminar II (5)</p>

\* **Advanced Standing:** The Advanced Standing MSW program begins with a required 2-credit course to prepare students for graduate-level study. SOWK 650: Advanced Standing Preparation Seminar is taken by students during the summer prior to their one-year program requirements. Other than the seminar, the AS Program is the same as the concentration year of the Traditional Program outlined above. Students must pass SOWK 650 with a grade of B or better to continue in the program.

\*\* **Elective:** Students must complete 3-credits of a graduate-level elective. This is typically taken in summer or fall semesters after the first two semesters of the program depending upon when the student can fit an elective course into their schedule. Approval is required to take more than 12-credits in any semester, thus special permission would be required to take the elective in the fall of the first year and spring semesters of either year.

**Approved Elective Courses:** Students may choose from the courses listed below or may propose to substitute a different graduate-level elective to meet the 3-credit requirement. The course must fit within the scope of social work practice. Students must complete the necessary paperwork and get approval from their advisor for any substitutions.

### ***Social Work Courses***

- SOWK 515: Child & Family Welfare (3)
- SOWK 519: Social Work & Aging (3)
- SOWK 522: Social Work & Chemical Dependency (3)
- SOWK 525: Social Work in Health (3)
- SOWK 527: Social Work & Domestic Violence (3)
- SOWK 530: Social Work in School Settings (3)
- SOWK 532: Social Work & Disabilities (3)

### ***Other Courses***

#### ***Counseling and Student Personnel***

- CSP 647: Crisis Intervention Strategies (3)
- CSP 650: Child/Adolescent Counseling (3)

#### ***Ethnic Studies***

- ETHN 650: Helping Across Cultures (3)
- ETHN 660: Cross-Cultural Training & Diversity Management (3)

#### ***Gerontology***

- GERO 600: Gerontology Theory and Practice (3)

#### ***Business Administration***

- MBA 642: Management of Human Resources (2)
- MBA 651: Managing Behavior in a Changing World (2)
- MBA 665: Leadership (2)
- MBA 667: Organizational Development and Change (2)

#### ***Non-Profit Leadership Program***

- NPL 673: Non-profit Leadership and Management (3) [Online]

#### ***Political Science and Public Administration***

- POL 628: Public Management (3)
- POL 662: Human Resource Management (3)

#### ***Clinical Psychology***

- PSYC 555: Abnormal Psychology (3)
- PSYC 576: Applied Behavioral Analysis (3)

#### ***Sociology/Human Services***

- SOC 517: Program Administration (3)
- SOC 566: Program Planning (3)

#### ***Urban and Regional Studies***

- URBS 553: Grants Administration (3)
- URBS 602: Urban Planning Process (3)

**NOTE:** These courses are subject to enrollment availability. For information about specific courses you may need to contact the department offering the courses. For a listing of all graduate course offerings, see the Graduate Studies Bulletin. Link: <http://www.mnsu.edu/supersite/academics/bulletins/graduate/>

## MSW Admission and Application Process

Please read these instructions carefully. Admission to the MSW program requires you to submit two different sets of application materials, which are sent directly to two different offices at the University. Failure to submit BOTH sets of application materials by the January 31 deadline will result in an incomplete application and will not be reviewed for admission by the MSW Admission Committee.

**Part A. All applicants must submit the following documents to the College of Graduate Studies and Research (CGS) at Minnesota State University, Mankato:**

1. **Completed [Application for Graduate Study](http://grad.mnsu.edu/applying/).** Please note that this is a two-page application; page two must be submitted in duplicate. Information, application and additional materials are available online at the College of Graduate Studies (CGS) <<http://grad.mnsu.edu/applying/>>
2. **Two sets of official transcripts listing all previous undergraduate and/or graduate degree(s) and study from all institutions previously attended.** These documents should be sent directly from the degree granting institution to the CGS. The CGS will obtain copies of Minnesota State University, Mankato transcripts for students who previously attended this institution. (NOTE: This process must be followed even if the applicant has previously studied at Minnesota State Mankato, is a current or former undergraduate or graduate student, or is a current or former employee.)
3. **Verification of pending baccalaureate degree (BA, BS, BSW, BSSW)** from a regionally accredited college or university if undergraduate degree has not been completed at time of application. A signed letter from registrar's office on letter head is sufficient. If the applicant is admitted, a degree verifying transcript should be forwarded when available. If it is not received, a hold may be placed on the student's admission until the degree verifying transcripts are received.
4. **Completed [immunization form](http://grad.mnsu.edu/forms/immunization.pdf)** <<http://grad.mnsu.edu/forms/immunization.pdf>>
5. **Application fee** required of applicants applying to any graduate degree program. This fee should be made out to the payment of Minnesota State University, Mankato and accompany the Graduate Studies application.

*NOTE: No standardized exams or tests are required for application to the MSW program.*

**Part A should be sent directly to the following address:**

**Graduate Admissions Coordinator  
College of Graduate Studies and Research  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
115 Alumni Foundation Center  
Mankato, MN 56001**

### **International Applicants**

International applicants must be degree seeking students. Visit the University's International Applicant webpage or contact the Office of International Students for more information and assistance. See information online at the following URL <<http://grad.mnsu.edu/applying/internationalletter.html>>

### **Financial Aid and Graduate Assistantships**

Applicants interested in applying for financial aid or graduate assistantships should seek information from the following University websites. Deadlines for these are posted on their websites.

Student Financial Services <<http://www.mnsu.edu/campushub/>>

Graduate Assistantships <<http://grad.mnsu.edu/assistantships/>>

**Part B. All applicants to the MSW program must submit the documents outlined below in one envelope directly to the Department of Social Work at Minnesota State University, Mankato.**

*See complete instructions and details on the Application and Recommendation Forms.*

1. The completed MSW Application Form;
2. Three recommendation forms with letters;
3. Professional statement; and,
4. Professional resume.

**Part B should be sent in one packet directly to:**

**MSW Program Director  
Department of Social Work  
358 Trafton Science Center North  
Minnesota State University, Mankato  
Mankato, MN 56001**

### **Application Deadline and Notification**

**All materials must be received in our office or postmarked by January 31, 2010 to be evaluated for admission to both cohorts that begin in 2010.** Consideration for admission will not be given to applicants until all of their admission materials have been submitted and general admissions criteria met. An incomplete set of application materials may result in a delay of review and/or denial of admission to the program. Applications received after January 31 but by March 31 *may be reviewed only if space remains* after the priority applications are reviewed. Applicants will be notified by email when their application has been completed and is under review. Applicants will receive a letter in the U.S. mail regarding their admission status following the review of all materials. Notification should be made approximately 6-8 weeks after the application deadline, but not before March 15, 2010.

## Statement of Responsibilities & Agreements

*Please read the following statements so you are familiar with them. If you are admitted to the program, you will be asked to agree to these statements at the time of accepting the offer of admission.*

### **Introduction**

Those wishing to complete a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree must be fully informed of the commitments they are making to the academic, professional, and client communities and be prepared to accept the responsibilities and the consequences of this commitment. In addition, agencies where students are placed for field practicum may have particular requirements or require additional information from students to assure the safety of clients, the confidentiality of services, and the absence of conflicts with agency policies. Students are expected to comply with this agreement and other agency requests that do not infringe on their civil rights. Failure to meet one or more of the conditions in this Statement of Responsibilities and Agreements may negatively impact your status as a student in good standing in the MSW program and could result in your not being able to complete the program.

### **Statement on Accreditation Status**

Since this is a new MSW program, it will not be fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) at the time enrollment. This fact has some implications for students applying to and completing this program. In order to become a licensed graduate or independent social worker (LGSW, LISW), or an independent clinical social worker (LICSW) in the State of Minnesota, a student has to graduate with an MSW degree from a program that is accredited by CSWE. New programs are not immediately accredited and have to submit to a standard set of reviews before being given that designation. Initially, this program was in "Pre-Candidacy" status, and now is in "Candidacy" status, before becoming fully "Accredited." CSWE requires that before accreditation is conferred upon a program, student learning and other program objectives must be assessed. Upon this program's successful completion of the full process, accreditation status is conferred retroactively to program graduates. Graduates of this program may test and hold a temporary license in the state of Minnesota if they meet all other requirements of the Minnesota Board of Social Work. For more information, see our web site, which is updated regularly.

### **Statement on Program Expectations**

This program is being offered only as it is laid out in the program requirements document found in this packet. Students who are admitted need to proceed through the requirements in the sequence and order in which they are laid out, taking required classes when they are offered. There currently is no part-time option for the MSW program.

### **Access for Students with Disabilities Policy**

In accordance with University policy, the Department of Social Work is committed to ensuring equal educational opportunity and full participation for qualified persons with disabilities as is legally required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act. All applicants and students with a disability may request accommodation through the Office of Disability Services. Visit the Office of Disabilities Services at 132 Memorial Library or call 507-389-2825 (V/TTY). Student disability accommodations will be made by faculty based upon the advisement of the Office of Disability Services. (For full policy, please refer to Graduate Student MSW Program Handbook.)

## ***Statement on Professional and Ethical Behavior***

This part of this document discusses issues related to the professional and ethical behavior of professional social workers. Social workers and social work students are expected to demonstrate high standards of professional behavior. Your first obligation is to clients, but you also have obligations to peers, colleagues, and the profession. To help you to understand the ethical obligations of professional social work, we ask that you read the following documents on-line and ask any questions you need to understand the implications of these documents.

- National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, found at <http://www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code/default.asp>
- Minnesota Board of Social Work Student Handbook, found at <http://www.socialwork.state.mn.us>
- Social Work Statutes and Practice Act, found at <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/148B/>

## ***Potential Barriers to Professional Service***

While the social work profession believes in the possibility of growth and change, students must be aware of personal issues or problems that could impact their practice. Students need to assume responsibility for any barriers to professional service that may arise during their coursework, practicum, or subsequent employment. Issues such as chemical dependency, physical health or medical concerns, mental health or emotional problems, and severe unrelieved stress, among others, may impair service to clients. These issues should be addressed throughout one's academic and professional career with the appropriate professionals or supervisors as needed.

## ***Background Checks & Legal History***

Because social workers work with many vulnerable populations, legal background checks are often required for field placement and employment situations. Substantiated complaints of maltreatment against children and vulnerable adults could preclude employment in settings related to those populations. Previous termination from volunteer, internship, or paid positions because of sexual abuse or sexual harassment could also limit employment. Applicants with a history of violence or sexual harassment should have successfully completed rehabilitation for these problems. Background checks are required for MSW students during your first semester in the program so that they are available prior to the first practicum placement. These may be repeated in subsequent years or at the request of some agencies. Students should be aware that past legal problems, particularly any violations of criminal code, may limit field practicum and employment opportunities. Such legal history is reviewed when application is made for social work licensure in the State of Minnesota. A conviction for a felony, gross misdemeanor, and some misdemeanors can keep you from being licensed and may limit your employment options. It is to your benefit to be frank about this type of history with your advisor and supervisor as needed.

## ***Acceptance Agreement***

*You do not have to agree to accept the provisions outlined here in order to apply to the MSW program. But, if you are admitted into the program, you will be asked to read this document again and sign an agreement of understanding. Should you have any questions, please feel free to ask us.*