Binghamton University
College of Community and Public Affairs

Social Work Department

Graduate Student Handbook
2015-2016

This Graduate Student Handbook 2015-2016
is your guide to the Social Work Department and the MSW Program.
It contains the most up-to-date information available on a variety of issues
and topics that may be of interest and/or concern to you.
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Introduction

Overview

The Social Work Department is housed within the College of Community and Public Affairs and is located in The University Downtown Center, 67 Washington Street, Binghamton, NY. Faculty and staff offices are presently located on the Third Floor.

The Social Work Department is one of four within the College of Community and Public Affairs. Some of the services utilized by graduate students are provided centrally by the University. These include but are not limited to such services as alumni relations, degree certification, counseling services, and career services. For other aspects of the graduate experience, such as academic advising, registration, and student progress evaluation, faculty and staff within the Department of Social Work serve as the primary resource. The Social Work faculty and staff are responsible for the development, delivery, and continuous evaluation of the MSW program and curriculum.

The Social Work Department houses an educational program leading to the Master of Social Work degree. As a community-focused program, the Department of Social Work is responding to a critical need in the region for accessible, high-quality social work education. The curriculum of the Department is designed to be in compliance with the Council on Social Work Education’s Standards for Accreditation of Social Work Programs. Many applicants to the program are non-traditional students already working in the social service sector who want to advance their education and improve their ability to respond to client needs. The program recognizes the need to balance family obligations with the demands of full-time jobs and financial constraints. Historically an individual in this region who sought further education in social work had to commute long distances to attend classes. This program is centered on the needs of this region and recognizes the challenges that many students in this area face when returning to school.

The MSW program at Binghamton offers a unique curriculum in recognition of the growing need in this region for social workers who can work to support families, children, and the elderly as well as individual working-age adults. The curriculum focuses on the full life span and teaches students skills necessary to utilize strengths-based, empowerment models of intervention. The program prepares social workers to work with groups, organizations, and communities, as well as individuals and families, responding to the needs of rural areas and small cities where resources are limited.

It is the hope and intent of this program that by training competent and effective social workers in an empowering, inclusive environment, and helping them acquire a broad base of knowledge and skills to work with client systems of all sizes, human suffering and social and economic injustice can be alleviated. Students are encouraged to participate in the activities of the Graduate Student Organization in the Social Work Department. The organization provides a vital link for input into the governance of the MSW program. Student representation is also solicited for Department committees.

MSW Program Mission Statement

The mission of the program is to prepare social workers for autonomous, knowledge-based, advanced generalist practice within an integrated community of scholars, practitioners and learners. The principles that guide the program are:

- A focus on people’s strengths
- A celebration of human diversity
- The application of multi-system practice methods to promote human well-being and fair, equitable communities
- A commitment to social justice
- A focus on working with diverse clients from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual-cultural perspective across the entire life span.
A focus on social work practice and collaboration with clients and organizations in public and not-for-profit settings.

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MSW Program

Degree Requirements

This is a 64 credit hour program that can be done on either a full or part-time basis.

The full-time program can be completed in two traditional academic years (4 semesters). Full-time students will take 16 credits each semester.

The part-time program will take 3 ½ years to complete and will require taking summer classes. Part-time students will take 6 or 7 credits each semester.

PLEASE NOTE: The number and sequencing of courses is not negotiable; students cannot transfer between full-time and part-time enrollment.

Curriculum

The curriculum is divided into two levels: the professional foundation and the advanced generalist concentration.

Curriculum for Full-Time Students

Professional Foundation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fall Semester- Year 1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 504</td>
<td>Foundations of Scientific Inquiry w/Social Systems</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 505</td>
<td>Human Behavior in the Social Environment</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 510</td>
<td>Generalist Social Work Practice I</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 515</td>
<td>Social Welfare Policy and Programs</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 591</td>
<td>Field Instruction I</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
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Spring Semester- Year 1

| SW 503                | Diversity and Oppression                           | 3 credits |
| SW 511                | Generalist Social Work Practice II                 | 3 credits |
| SW 512                | Generalist Social Work Practice III                | 3 credits |
| SW 506                | Psychopathology & Pharmacology                     | 3 credits |
| SW 592                | Field Instruction II                                | 4 credits |

Advanced Generalist Concentration

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<tr>
<th>Fall Semester- Year 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 521</td>
<td>Advanced Social Work Practice with Individuals</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 522</td>
<td>Advanced Social Work Practice with Organizations</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 523</td>
<td>Advanced Social Work Practice with Groups</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW XXX</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 593</td>
<td>Field Instruction III</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
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Spring Semester- Year 2
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 524</td>
<td>Advanced Social Work Practice with Families</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 525</td>
<td>Advanced Social Work Practice with Communities</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 520</td>
<td>Evaluation of Practice</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW XXX</td>
<td>Elective</td>
<td>3 credits</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 594</td>
<td>Field Instruction IV</td>
<td>4 credits</td>
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### Curriculum for Part-Time Students

**Professional Foundation**

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<tr>
<th>Fall- Year 1</th>
<th>SW 504</th>
<th>Foundations of Scientific Inquiry w/Social Systems</th>
<th>3 credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SW 510</td>
<td>Generalist Social Work Practice I</td>
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<td>SW 505</td>
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<th>Summer- Year 1</th>
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<td>SW 515</td>
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<td>SW 511</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 512</td>
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### Advanced Generalist Curriculum

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<td>SW 521</td>
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<th>Spring- Year 3</th>
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<td>SW XXX</td>
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<td>SW 593</td>
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<th>Fall- Year 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>SW 520</td>
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<td>SW 594</td>
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Course Descriptions

All Social Work Courses are 3 credits, unless otherwise noted.

SW 503 DIVERSITY AND OPPRESSION

The primary purpose of this course is for students to be able to grapple with and identify meaningful, working definitions of prejudice, discrimination, and oppression and to situate these definitions—and people's lived experiences—within historical and contemporary societal contexts in social work practice, research, policy, theory and activism. The course is designed to create explicit linkages between practice and policy. Students will discuss racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, biphobia, ageism, classism, ableism, xenophobia, etc., as well as the ways in which these overlap and intersect, and the societal implications of such overlaps and intersections. Students will examine and develop models of culturally competent, ethical social work practice by integrating an understanding of the dynamics of prejudice, discrimination and oppression with a professional use of self and a commitment to social justice.

SW 504 Foundations of Scientific Inquiry with Social Systems

For social work practice to be effective, it is important that social workers be both consumers of and contributors to research efforts that aim to build knowledge and improve social work practice. Social work practice and research share common features and processes: (1) Both are fundamentally problem-solving enterprises, and (2) Both take place in the context of the communities in which people live and the organizations that provide services and support. This course presents basic concepts and principals of research in the community and organizational context in which people live and social work is practiced. Students are encouraged to generalize this knowledge to inform their practice and enhance their learning throughout the broader curriculum. The course content will integrate the core themes related to clients' strengths, multiculturalism and diversity, social justice, social change, and behavioral and social science research. This course will provide students with an understanding and appreciation of a scientific approach to building knowledge for social work practice and for evaluating service delivery in all areas of practice. Ethical standards of scientific inquiry will be presented. The course will include analysis of theoretical bases on which the research enterprise rests. Students will learn how to formulate research questions and understand the basics of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Students will be introduced to analyses of data that include using both statistical procedures and qualitative theme analysis, including computerized data analysis tools.

SW 505 HUMAN BEHAVIOR IN THE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

This course introduces graduate level social work students to a set of foundational and influential theories that can be utilized to consider human bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual development in various contexts. In particular, we will explore theories about the range of social systems in which individuals live and work within families, groups, organizations, institutions, and communities. Using an interdisciplinary, liberal arts perspective, students will gain knowledge about human development across the life course and become familiarized with a variety of frameworks for interpreting the interactions among human biological, psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual systems as they affect and are affected by human behavior. The impact of social and economic forces on individuals and social systems will be addressed, including theoretical content about the patterns, dynamics, and consequences of discrimination, economic imbalances, and oppression. Values and ethical issues related to theories presented will also be considered. Throughout the course, students will be encouraged to critique and apply knowledge to understand person and environment.
SW 506 PSYCHOPATHOLOGY & PHARMACOLOGY

This course will examine contemporary social work practice in mental health, both by familiarizing students with a range of diagnoses as presented in The American Psychiatric Association’s Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, 5th edition (DSM-5), and also by examining the etiology of presenting conditions from a bio-psycho-social-cultural-spiritual perspective. A review of current psychopharmacological approaches for common disorders will be reviewed. Students will also be introduced to practice approaches that may be used with specific diagnoses and presenting conditions. Students will examine the mental health service delivery system, the technology it utilizes to treat mental health symptoms, and the effectiveness of the various technologies. Practice issues that may arise in working with consumers at all system levels will be examined and discussed.

SW 510. GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE I

This course will present an introduction to generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes. It will train students in the use of the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities through ethical practice. Content on assessment will focus on the exploration of client strengths and problems in individual behavior, and interactions between people and their environments. Content will also include the following skills: defining issues; collecting and assessing data; planning and contracting; identifying alternative interventions; selecting and implementing appropriate courses of actions; using appropriate research to monitor and evaluate outcomes; and termination. Particular attention will focus on working with individuals.

SW 511. GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE II

This course will continue a presentation of the knowledge, values, and skills to enhance the well being of people through generalist social work practice. Content will again include the following skills: defining issues; collecting and assessing data; planning and contracting; identifying alternative interventions; selecting and implementing appropriate courses of actions; using appropriate research to monitor and evaluate outcomes; and, termination. Attention will focus on interpersonal practice with families and groups.

SW 512. GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE III

This course will continue a presentation of the knowledge, values, and skills needed to enhance the well-being of people through generalist social work practice. Content will again include the following skills: defining issues; collecting and assessing data; planning and contracting; identifying alternative interventions; selecting and implementing appropriate courses of actions; using appropriate research to monitor and evaluate outcomes; and termination. Using the strengths perspective, attention will focus on working with organizations, communities and other larger client systems around issues involving social justice and social change.

Special attention to vulnerable populations within community and organizational settings will be included in course content, with a focus on working with people in poverty, racial and ethnic minorities, women, gays and lesbians, and others who are oppressed and affected by discrimination.

SW 515. SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND PROGRAMS

The history, philosophy, and structure of social welfare and social work within the American social system are presented in a model that students may use to understand social welfare issues, programs, and services and to enhance social work practice with clients. The role of social policy in helping or deterring people in the maintenance or attainment of optimal health and well being, and the effect of policy on social work practice will be explored. Students will be taught to analyze current social policy within the context of historical and contemporary factors that shape policy. Course content will include the political and organizational processes used to influence policy, the
process of policy formulation, and the frameworks for analyzing policies in light of principles of social and economic justice.

This course provides students with a foundation for understanding social problems and social welfare policies to prepare them to be informed and competent providers of social services. Based on the premise that effective social work practice is grounded in a solid foundation of the larger social forces that have an impact on people’s capacity to meet basic human needs, this course will help build this understanding and provide students with basic analytic tools needed to engage in the process of changing and/or formulating policies and programs to serve clients more effectively.

Principles of policy development and analysis will be examined from a strengths perspective with an emphasis on social justice. In particular, the course will examine the ways in which discrimination and oppression have affected the structure of social welfare policies and the impact of these policies on the poor, people of color, women, the disabled, the elderly, and other vulnerable population groups. The impact of professional and societal values and ethics on the development of social policy will be examined. The historical development of the social work profession and its role within the social welfare system will also be studied.

SW 520. EVALUATION OF PRACTICE

This course will provide students with an understanding and appreciation of a scientific, analytic approach to building knowledge for ethical, competent social work practice and for evaluating service delivery in all areas of practice. The course will emphasize application of appropriate research principles and methods in design, implementation and evaluation of social work services in both individual and in larger and more complex client systems. Major frameworks will address intervention research and program evaluation. This course seeks to foster thoughtful, self-reflective professional practice, and students will have an opportunity to apply course content to existing services in the context of their current field placement.

SW 521. ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH INDIVIDUALS

This course will prepare the student to engage in therapeutic interventions with individuals in a culturally competent manner and taking into account the bio-psycho-social-spiritual realities of that individual’s world. The course will be taught from a Strength-Based/ecological perspective and will focus on the following specific modalities; cognitive-behavioral therapy and solution-focused therapy. Further content will be included on other evidence-based therapeutic approaches to familiarize students with their tenets and parameters. The role of individual treatment in social work’s history and development will be explored as it relates to current practice. The effects of policy and societal influences on the practice of individual treatment in its various settings will be discussed.

SW 522. ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH ORGANIZATIONS

This course will examine the organizational policies, processes, structures, and roles that translate social policies into goals, services strategies, and case decisions. A number of conceptual frameworks are explored for understanding the role of professional social workers in organizational settings that provide human services. Organizational theories of administration will be presented as a framework for examining administrative practices in human service organizations and other host settings in which social workers are employed. The role and practice of supervision within the profession will also be explored within various organizational contexts.

Social workers have an ethical obligation to strive to make social institutions more humane and responsive to human needs. This course will explore the application of fundamental social work skills to practice within social service organizations as well as the concept of excellence in social administration, leadership, and management. Issues to be considered throughout the semester include the infusion of the strengths perspective in leadership and management, how issues of social and economic justice relate to organizational functioning, and the creation of client centered organizations that recognize and attend to the needs of clients who
are dealing with oppression based on their race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, age, gender, and/or sexual orientation.

Theories of leadership and supervision and practice principles will be covered in this course as well as the ethical and legal issues faced by social work supervisors. Consideration will also be given to alternative methods of leadership management including stewardship and feminist perspectives.

SW 523. ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH GROUPS

This course is designed to deepen students’ understanding of the major models of social work practice with groups relevant for agency-based practice. Having completed this course, students should have developed beginning tools to enable them to apply these models in their practice. All models will be viewed through an ecological lens, integrating the impact of policy, ethics, values, agency, economics, race, gender, sexual orientation, culture and oppression. Group work will be looked at from a developmental perspective exploring group stages and tasks over time, as well as from a systemic perspective. Group work models to be examined include: remedial, reciprocal, psychosocial problem solving, empowerment and cognitive-behavioral. There will be opportunities for students to apply these models to a range of client situations in a variety of settings. Students will not only learn about the models but also get an opportunity to evaluate them for their strengths and weaknesses as they fit with what they are learning in class, work and internships, and as they examine them against their own individual styles. Class participation through discussion, videotapes, and experiential exercises will play a large role in augmenting reading assignments and lecture material.

SW 524. ADVANCED SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH FAMILIES

This course is designed to build on students’ beginning understanding of social work practice with families, providing in-depth information and experience with the major models of family therapy. All models will be viewed through an ecological lens, integrating the impact of policy, values, agency, economics, race, gender, culture and oppression. Family treatment will be looked at from a developmental perspective through the family life cycle and from a systemic perspective. Systems models to be explored include the intergenerational, structural, brief strategic and solution-oriented approaches. There will be opportunities for students to apply these perspectives to a range of clients in a variety of settings. Students will not only learn about the models but also get an opportunity to evaluate them for their strengths and weaknesses as they fit with what they are learning in class, work and internships, and as they examine them against their own individual styles. Class participation through discussion, videotapes, and experiential exercises will play a large role in augmenting reading assignments and lecture material.

SW 525. SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH COMMUNITIES

This course is designed to equip students with a broad range of interactional, analytical, and political skills needed to assist communities and community organizations and to serve as change agents to promote social and economic justice. The technical and practical elements of planning, organizing and development work, as well as social advocacy, will be explored with emphasis on the values of democratic, participatory models and methods which empower individuals and groups. Content will also include assessment of major social problems and how such assessment influences the choice of intervention strategies.

Building on the content of Generalist Social Work Practice III, this course will further develop the theories, methods, and skills of community practice. Using the strength perspective this course will focus on the abilities of communities and their members to be active participants and to have an impact on their environment. This course will assist students in the knowledge and skill development needed to effectively advocate with and on behalf of different human service communities including place and non-placed based communities.

Throughout this course emphasis will be placed on the following core themes: the strengths of communities to create productive exchange and achieve client system goals, community advocacy skills that promote opportunities for oppressed, stigmatized and marginalized populations to access and successfully negotiate needed environmental resources, and skills that
demonstrate respect, sensitivity and appreciation for populations of diversity and their contributions to societal well-being.

**SW 575. ADVANCED STANDING SEMINAR**

This course is geared toward preparing advanced standing students for the advanced portion of the social work program curriculum and is designed to deepen students’ understanding of social work practice. Students will meet as a group throughout the semester as well as individually with the instructor to develop individual learning goals that respond to the fit between students’ BSW programs and Binghamton University Social Work Program’s foundation curriculum.

**SW 580. Special Topics in Social Work**

Specific topics will vary from semester to semester. Topics could include a type of advanced practice (i.e. Advocacy), practice with a particular population (i.e., social work practice with children), a field of practice (i.e., social work practice in criminal justice settings), or a particular set of issues very relevant to social work practice (i.e., gender issues).

**SW 591, 592, 593, 594. FIELD INSTRUCTION I, II, III, IV**

4 credits

Grading: Pass/Fail

Field Instruction assists in preparing graduate students to practice social work both competently and ethically with clients/systems. The practicum provides students with structured supervised opportunities to integrate the values, skills and knowledge learned in the classroom into interactions with actual clients and systems in practice. The field experience focuses on problem solving at multiple levels, such as individual, family, groups and community. Students learn to examine how environmental conditions may affect people adversely. The student develops an awareness of how "who they are" impacts the process of intervention. Professional communication that is consistent with the language of the practice area is mastered by students. Professional supervision is utilized by students to enhance their own learning process. Finally, students will be asked to critique, implement and evaluate their host agency's policies/procedures while practicing within ethical guidelines.

**SW 597. Social Work Independent Study**

Independent Study (SW 597)

An independent study is a learning experience that allows a student an opportunity for self-directed learning related to an area of academic and/or professional interest. The independent study will involve, in a broad sense, critical analysis and application or development of theories and concepts relating to the area of inquiry chosen by the student. Although the student may engage in creative projects or field research, such endeavors must be accompanied by the previously described academic approaches and written assignments.

To qualify for an independent study, a student must meet all of the following criteria:

- be matriculated in Social Work
- have a minimum GPA of 3.5 at the time of the request
- select an independent study related to the educational goals of the student, who should have sufficient background to undertake the independent study and learn from the experience

To apply for an independent study:

- the student must submit a completed Independent Study Cover Sheet (.PDF, 97KB) and an acceptable proposal to a faculty member who has experience related to the area in which the independent study will be undertaken
• begin planning well before the registration period for the semester in which the independent study will be undertaken because preparation of a proposal requires a great deal of thought and consideration

Other considerations for an independent study:

• a student can register for an independent study only after the proposal has been approved by the faculty sponsor, academic advisor and SW department chair

• all graduate independent study proposals should be filed no later than the middle of the second week of class. Check with the department office for exact dates. No proposals will be considered after the deadline for adding courses has passed

A copy of the student’s cover sheet and proposal will be placed in the student’s academic file.

Independent studies are graded with either normal grading option or pass/fail. The grading option is determined at the discretion of the faculty sponsor. After it is instituted, the grading option cannot be changed without the approval of the faculty sponsor, advisor and department chair.

Independent studies can be taken for one to three credits. As a general guideline, a three-credit study will require written assignment(s) of at least 20 pages.

An independent study cannot be undertaken if a course is available or offered in the intended areas of study.

Academic Advising

Upon admission into the MSW Program, department staff will notify each student of her/his designated advisor. To support students’ academic and professional development in the MSW Program, each student is required - at a minimum - to meet with her/his advisor every fall and spring semester in which she/he is enrolled in the program. Each term, it is the student’s responsibility to schedule her/his advising appointment with her/his appointed advisor. A student who does not fulfill the advising requirement may jeopardize her/his future course registration.

Field Education

Field education is an integral part of the educational process and is intended to guide and support students through ongoing supervision and by creating opportunities for students to apply concepts discussed in coursework. Further, it affords students opportunities to acquire knowledge and practical skills needed to practice competently within the social work profession. The coursework and field instruction closely correspond with one another and assignments in coursework are often applied within the fieldwork setting.

Students in the MSW program must complete two field placement internships of 510 hours each in an approved human service agency. Students with BSW degrees and in the Advanced Standing Program must complete a single field placement internship over 2 semesters. Each internship extends over at least two semesters. Full-time students begin field education in their first semester, while part-time students begin field education in the second year of study.

Field placements are arranged by Sophia Resciniti, Director of Field Education; students may not contact and arrange field placements on their own. Students will, however, be given options in the placement process. Every effort is made to secure appropriate field placements for students in geographic locations convenient for them. Specific detail regarding the requirements and policies for field education can be found in the MSW Field Manual.

Grades

The grading system of the Graduate School applies to all graduate-level courses offered at the university. The grading system used is governed by University Graduate School policy, which
students can find in the Graduate School Bulletin. Grades are issued on a letter scale: A through C- are passing grades; F is a failing grade. Grades of S (satisfactory) and U (unsatisfactory) may be used in a limited number of cases for which no greater precision in grading is required. The Department of Social Work has opted to use grades of S and U for Field Instruction I-IV. These grades are not assigned a numerical value and thus are not averaged in with other grades in computing grade-point averages. A grade of S denotes a minimum level of academic performance equivalent to at least a B.

For the purposes of computing semester or cumulative averages, each letter grade is assigned a quality point value as follows:

- A= 4.0
- A- = 3.7
- B+= 3.3
- B = 3.0
- B- = 2.7
- C+= 2.3
- C = 2.0
- C- = 1.7
- F= 0.0

The Graduate School combines these grade values with course credit hours to produce a grade-point average.

All MSW syllabi specify percentages that correspond with letter grades in each course. This is consistent across all the MSW courses with the exception of Field Instruction I-IV, and is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>94 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74 – 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Incomplete Grades**

Graduate students who receive federal or state financial aid may lose these benefits if they take Incompletes. Unless the coursework is completed by the student and a final letter grade is submitted by the instructor of the course or if the coursework is not completed within the specified time and the Instructor assigns a grade, the mark of I reverts to the mark of W (withdrawn). Requests for extensions of the Incomplete deadlines require the approval of the instructor of the course and the Vice Provost/Dean of the Graduate School. No extensions of Incompletes are considered beyond the maximum allowable extension date, which is one calendar year from when the Incomplete was assigned. Once an Incomplete has reverted to a W, no further opportunity to complete the course is available to the student.

A grade to convert the Incomplete must be received by the Registrar’s Office no later than 6 months from the last day of classes of the term that the course was taken; if not received, the Incomplete will automatically change to an irrevocable Withdraw, which may have financial implications for the student, as outlined on the Graduate School website. Normally 6 months is not required for a student to convert the Incomplete (e.g. student missed last two weeks of class, so needs approximately 2 weeks extension). The instructor may and in almost all cases should set an earlier deadline. Whenever possible, work should be completed before the next term starts, so that the student does not have to carry an overload. If the student’s funding appointment ends within the 6-month period, normally re-appointment funding by Graduate
School funds will not be extended until the Incomplete is converted to a grade. By granting an Incomplete, the instructor is indicating availability for this period in terms of consultation and grading. In accordance with Binghamton University policy, the instructor reserves the right to change the grade to an “F” if the student does not complete all requirements by the date stipulated, and no extension has been agreed to by the student and the instructor.

It is the expectation that, within the limits set forth above, faculty will take no longer than one month to file a final letter grade for the course once a student has submitted all coursework. A grade of Incomplete is automatically assigned in any course for which the instructor has not submitted a grade.

All courses taken by graduate students, including courses numbered below 500, are subject to the foregoing policies on incomplete grades. The CONTRACT FOR CONVERSION OF INCOMPLETE TO A GRADE form must be completed by both the instructor and student. The form can be found on the following page.
Incomplete Contract

An Incomplete (I) may be granted by an instructor when a student has completed most of the work for a course, but, due to circumstances beyond the student’s control, the student is unable to complete the course requirements on time.

Student:
B-Number:

Semester:
Course Number:
Course Title:
Credit Hours:
Instructor:

Reason for the Incomplete:

Remaining Requirements for the Completion of the Course:
Deadlines:
Coursework needs to be completed prior to the start of the following semester, as granting an Incomplete and extending the coursework completion date cannot interfere with course and curriculum prerequisites. This policy also prevents the student from having to carry an overload. The failure to resolve an Incomplete in a timely fashion may also have financial implications for the student, as outlined in the Graduate School Manual.

The instructor should consider the situation when determining the date by which the student must meet all requirements. For example, if the student missed the last two weeks of the course, the instructor should consider an extension of approximately two weeks. The instructor reserves the right to assign a failing grade (F) if the student does not complete all requirements by the date stipulated in this contract. By granting an Incomplete, the instructor is indicating availability for consultation and grading until the date stipulated in this contract.

The instructor’s deadline for submitting the grade will be ________________ and, therefore, the student must meet all requirements by ________________, so that the instructor has sufficient time to complete the grading process.

Agreement by the instructor to abide by the contract:
Instructor: __________________________ Date: __________

Agreement by the student to abide by the contract:
Student: __________________________ Date: __________

Approval by the Department Chair:
Department Chair: __________________________ Date: __________

The instructor should keep the original contract. Copies of the contract should be filed with the Department of Social Work and provided to the student and the academic advisor.
Advanced Standing

Binghamton offers an advanced standing option for graduates of an undergraduate social work program accredited by CSWE. The BSW degree must have been received within seven years of beginning the MSW program. Exceptions to this seven-year limit may be made by the Admissions Committee on a case-by-case basis for those applicants who have worked consistently in the field of social work since obtaining their BSW degree. Advanced standing students will be given credit for up to 29 hours of coursework, if they can demonstrate that they received comparable educational content in BSW courses for which they received a grade of “B” or better. The courses for which students may apply for advanced standing credit are:

- Human Behavior in the Social Environment I
- Foundations of Scientific Inquiry
- Social Work Generalist Practice I, II, III
- Research Methods in Social Work
- Social Welfare Policy and Programs
- Diversity and Oppression
- Field Instruction I, II

Students requesting advanced standing need to submit class syllabi for the courses which they believe provided them with similar content to that found in the above listed courses. The Director of Admissions then reviews the syllabi for comparability to Binghamton University MSW courses and makes a decision as to how many hours of advanced placement credit will be granted. Should a student seek credit through advanced standing for fieldwork, a copy of their field evaluations must be submitted to the Director of Field Education and forwarded for final review and approval. All advanced standing students participate in the Advanced Standing Seminar the summer prior to their beginning the program.

Transfer of Credit

Graduate courses successfully completed at another institution’s accredited MSW program may be accepted for credit toward the MSW degree at Binghamton in lieu of any of the required courses, provided such courses covered content similar to that taught in Binghamton University’s required courses.

A minimum grade of B is required for transfer credit. Graduate courses for which transfer credit is sought must have been taken within the last seven years to be considered. A maximum of 29 credits can be transferred toward the MSW degree.

Request for Transfer Credit forms are available in the MSW Program office. Course syllabi must be submitted with the form to the program office for consideration.

Academic credit is not given for life experience or previous work experience.

Guidelines on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities

Students can find information regarding their rights and responsibilities in the Social Work Department Handbook as well as the Graduate School Student Handbook at the following link http://gradschool.binghamton.edu/cs/handbookguidelines.asp#1
Academic and Professional Conduct

Professional & Ethical Conduct Standards for Social Work Students

The program has adopted professional and ethical conduct standards for social work students that when clearly and consistently observed and followed, allows students to be successful in the program.

The Department of Social Work’s mission is to prepare social workers for autonomous, knowledge-based, advanced generalist practice within an integrated community of scholars, practitioners and learners. The principles that guide the program are:

- A focus on people’s strengths
- A celebration of human diversity
- The application of multi-system practice methods to promote human well-being and fair, equitable communities
- A commitment to social justice
- A focus on working with diverse clients from a bio-psycho-social-spiritual-cultural perspective across the entire life span
- A focus on social work practice and collaboration with clients and organizations in public and not-for-profit settings.

The well-being of clients and the integrity of the social work profession are our top priorities. In order to remain in good standing in the Dept of SW, all students, consistent with in the NASW Code of Ethics, “…must not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance use, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.” (p. 23, NASW Code of Ethics).

The Department of Social Work has developed a list of Professional and Ethical Conduct Standards for Social Work Students which must be clearly and consistently observed and followed, in order for students to be successful in the program.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Skills and Essential Behaviors</th>
<th>Descriptors/Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional Ethics</td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding of, adheres to and promotes the NASW Code of Ethics.</td>
<td>Maintains confidentiality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the value of diversity. Works effectively and responsibly with people who are of differing races, ethnicities, abilities, ages, classes, genders, sexual orientations, religious beliefs and/or nationalities, etc.</td>
<td>Demonstrates openness to working with diverse groups and individuals of different backgrounds including fellow students, colleagues and clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Shows respect and effectively advocates for the rights of others.</td>
<td>Asks supervisor and instructors for help when needed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates a commitment to ending social and economic injustice.</td>
<td>Follows through with commitments.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Maintains and demonstrates comprehension of professional boundaries.</td>
<td>Maintains clear boundaries. For example, does not socialize with clients.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Is committed to clients’ freedom of choice and self – determination.</td>
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<td>Is consistently honest and demonstrates integrity by being truthful about one’s own background, experiences and qualifications.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self – Awareness</td>
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<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrains from sexually harassing others, making of verbal or physical threats</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability to acknowledge how one’s own attitudes, beliefs, biases and personal</td>
<td>Demonstrates ability and willingness to listen to others and is open to feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal or sexual ways.</td>
<td>past experiences affect professional judgment, decision-making, thinking, behavior and</td>
<td>Advocates effectively in a constructive manner according to NASW guidelines.</td>
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<td>relationships.</td>
<td>Utilizes institutional channels first in order to effectively resolve conflicts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refrains from being involved in sexual relationships with clients or</td>
<td>Is open to feedback and constructive criticism.</td>
<td>Demonstrates respect for the professional expertise of fellow agency workers, students in class, and program faculty and staff, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>participating in dual relationships with clients where conflicts of interest</td>
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<tr>
<td>may develop or exist.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilizes clinical supervision effectively and demonstrates a willingness to</td>
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<td>Maintains commitments to clients, students and colleagues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ask for help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is open and committed to learning from colleagues, classroom and field</td>
<td>Takes initiative with basic tasks in agencies such as making phone calls, taking messages,</td>
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<tr>
<td>instructors.</td>
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<td>calling agencies to gain information about their services, locating resources in the</td>
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<td>Seeks out and utilizes help when needed and responsibly addresses one’s own</td>
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<td>community.</td>
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<td>health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and</td>
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<td>professional performance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to distinguish between facts and inference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to draw conclusions based in relevant information and evidence.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates ability to think critically.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an ability to write clearly with appropriate grammar and sentence construction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assessments of clients reflect a comprehensive, inclusive and relevant data.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates use and knowledge when working with clients through the use of process recordings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates willingness to take initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can identify problem solving steps to resolving challenges.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Able to communicate ideas clearly in writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professional Performance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shows willingness and ability to effectively prioritize, manage and complete tasks on time and observe and meet deadlines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seeks professional help and consultation when needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utilizes thoughtful and informed judgment in making professional decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the educational process, including field practice experiences.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Is able to form and sustain professional relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arrives on time to all classes, meetings and field agency required hours.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consistently follows through with commitments including group work assignments, field work and assignments.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates an ability to be flexible in responding to changing needs and priorities of the field agency and clients.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communicates in advance whenever there is an interruption of planned attendance or task completion and identifies alternatives for task completion to instructors, field instructors, field liaisons and academic advisors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voices concerns to field instructor and/or liaison in a respectful manner and in accordance with agency and field protocols and policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeps field instructor, liaison, instructors and staff apprised of issues that may arise and works proactively with all parties to alleviate issues.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Professional Performance**

Before being admitted to the program all prospective students are required to sign a contract (See Social Work Contract in Appendix B). In this contract students state that they have read and agree to abide by the NASW Code of Ethics. A few of the pertinent clauses in this contract are:

I will continue my professional development through regular faculty assessment of my academic and professional aptitude and performance.

I give any faculty or staff permission to discuss my progress in the MSW Program with the Director and any other social work faculty or staff members.

I understand that although I am admitted to the MSW Program, if my professional development is not deemed satisfactory by the social work faculty, the MSW Program has the right and the responsibility to request reassessment of my suitability for the program.

**Graduate students' responsibilities**

Graduate students must strictly observe professional standards and academic honesty in coursework, examinations, research and written reports, as well as in the professional treatment of the students, faculty, staff, community members, research subjects, clients, patients, and laboratory animals they may encounter in the process of their graduate education.
Student Conduct for Online Courses

The faculty and staff in the College of Community and Public Affairs are committed to serving all students. The intention is to create an intellectually stimulating, safe, and respectful class atmosphere. In return, all students are expected to honor the thoughts, opinions, and feelings of faculty, staff, other students, and guests. As is the case in the traditional class setting, the online class setting should be one that safely supports the exchange of diverse thoughts, views and ideas. In online courses, remember to:

- Keep microphone turned off unless you are speaking
- Work in a quiet space
- Have good lighting around you
- When posting comments, consider how someone else might interpret a controversial statement. Choose your words carefully and fully articulate your thoughts. Remember, you are on camera
- Wear appropriate attire for a classroom
- Everything in view of your camera can be seen by others
- Remember, the moderator can see everything typed in the Chat Room — even in “Private” chat mode
- Engage in discussion and debate, not arguments
- Generally, using all capital letters in online typing is considered SHOUTING so try and avoid this type of communication
- Remember this is a professional setting; Be sure to avoid “texting” language

Faculty, staff, students, and guests often bring case examples from practice settings to discuss in the context of the course material, but should refrain from including identifying information when discussing these case examples. Cases discussed in class should not be discussed outside the classroom (both in traditional and online settings).

Academic Standards

A cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 (on a scale where A = 4.0) is required for satisfactory academic standing and for graduate degree certification. When the GPA falls below 3.0, a student may be placed on academic probation (see below for further details). Graduate students may be dropped from the Graduate School by action of the Dean, on recommendation of the graduate program, or if it appears that they are not making satisfactory progress toward the degree and it is unlikely that they will satisfactorily complete the requirements for the degree.

Probation Policy

Binghamton University’s Graduate School Policy states that students must have a 3.0 GPA to receive a degree. Graduate School policy also states that the minimum requirement for continuing status is the maintenance of a 3.0 GPA. In the Department of Social Work, if a student’s GPA drops below a 3.0, s/he is placed on academic probation and must initiate a meeting with his/her advisor within the first week of the following semester in order to develop a plan to improve performance to attain a 3.0.

The student has one semester from when they fail to reach a 3.0 in order to bring his/her GPA to the required 3.0. If a student first falls below the 3.0 at the end of the semester s/he was expected to graduate, the student may retake concentration year classes (only if they received B- or lower [http://www2.binghamton.edu/grad-school/new-and-current-students/graduate-school-manual/manual-enrollment.html#repeat] in the semester following the one where s/he received less than a 3.0 GPA. If a student does not achieve the 3.0 in the semester following the one where s/he fell below the 3.0, the Department will recommend to the Graduate School that the student be dismissed from the program.

Students whose GPA falls below a 2.6 are deemed by the Graduate School to be in “academic jeopardy.” MSW students whose GPA falls below a 2.6 are immediately dismissed from the program when this occurs.
Additionally, the MSW Program has a policy that a grade of “F” or “U” in any course taken as either a matriculated or non-matriculated status, will result in automatic dismissal from the MSW Program.

Social Work Program Advancement Policy

Purpose:
The faculty and staff of the Binghamton University Department of Social Work are responsible for creating an educational environment that fosters student growth, academic success and professional development. When students apply to the program they sign an academic contract agreeing to advance their professional development and to have it assessed by social work faculty and staff throughout their time in the program. Our department Advancement policy supports this responsibility by addressing criteria including academic, professional and ethical conduct (e.g., being respectful; displaying integrity and honesty; addressing concerns in a clear and constructive manner; responding to evaluation and criticism with appropriate self-reflection and modification of behavior), ensuring that graduates of the program have the necessary professional conduct to effectively serve clients. When there are concerns about a student’s academic/professional conduct, the department may institute the Advancement policy as a way to address such behavior.

The nature of the social work profession demands that practitioners use sound professional judgment and exercise professional and ethical conduct in all aspects of their work. When there is evidence of unprofessional behavior e.g., cheating, plagiarism, misuse of university property, verbally or physically abusive behavior, behavior that is counter to the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics or other unprofessional conduct, the social work department has the right and responsibility to terminate enrollment of the student. Alternatively any student, who, at any time in the program is determined by the department faculty and administration to have engaged in unprofessional behavior may be required to participate in the social work Advancement process to assess and support their professional readiness. Students will not be approved for graduation if they have unexecuted/unresolved concern(s) in relation to the Advancement policy on file.

Process and Procedure:
Students will advance automatically from semester to semester unless they are informed otherwise. Problems in academic/professional and/or ethical behavior may be identified at any point in the semester by faculty (full-time and adjunct), field instructors or staff. Any faculty (full-time or adjunct), field instructor, or staff who identifies a concern regarding a student’s professional behaviors will confer with the department chair to see if the behavior can be handled inside of the class/field structure. If not, the concerned party/ies will put their concerns in writing and share them with the academic advisor and student.

1. The academic advisor will meet with the student to construct a written plan signed by the two of them with the goal being to resolve the professional and/or ethical deficiency. The plan shall state with specificity: 1.) the concern(s); 2.) the actions to be undertaken by the student; 3.) how success will be determined; and 4.) date(s) in which the student must demonstrate the completion of and compliance with the plan. This plan must allow a reasonable period of time for completion, but shall not allow more than one semester beyond the semester in which the concern is expressed.

2. If unable to reach consensus in the development of a plan, if the student does not agree that there is a concern, if the plan is not fulfilled and/or if concerns escalate, the written documents with evidence regarding the concerns are brought to the Social Work Grievance Committee Chair via email from the student’s advisor. The Grievance Committee Chair will appoint an Advancement Committee to consider next steps and whether the student can be advanced in the program.

3. Once notified, the Grievance Committee Chair will assemble an Advancement Committee that consists of two faculty (one of whom will serve as Chair of the Advancement Committee), one professional staff and one student representative. The student will be
the President of the Social Work Graduate Student Organization (SW-GSO). If the President is not available, then the President will designate another SW-GSO Officer to serve. If the Grievance Committee Chair is a/the person identifying the concern or is the student’s advisor, or if the Program Chair is unavailable (such as may be the case over the summer session) the Department Chair shall appoint the committee.

4. The Chair of the Advancement Committee will schedule a meeting within 14 business days of the committee being appointed to review any documents submitted by the student and gathered and submitted by the advisor, to hear the concerns from the parties, and to come to a determination. The student and advisor will need to email any documents to the Committee for their review a minimum of 7 business days prior to the meeting date.

The Advancement Committee will consider the concern(s) as explained by the academic advisor and person(s) identifying the concerns(s) and the response of the student. The student may be accompanied at the Advancement Co. meeting by an advocate who is permitted to communicate directly with the student but who is not allowed to directly address the committee.

At the culmination of the meeting, the Advancement Committee may choose to:
- Dismiss the concern as not being substantiated or having no merit;
- Place conditions on the student’s advancement in the program;
- Recommend the student be suspended for a period of time or dismissed from the program.

If further questions need to be answered prior to making a final determination, the committee has the right to question the student and/or others involved in putting forward the concern(s) after the meeting. The Advancement Committee shall write a report that summarizes their deliberations and decisions and send it to the student, the Social Work Dept. Chair, the student’s academic advisor, those raising concerns and the Dean of the College of Community and Public Affairs. The report shall be delivered to the student via certified mail within 20 working days of the Advancement Committee meeting.

**Appeal Process:**

If the student, the academic advisor and/or individual(s) expressing the concern(s) is/are dissatisfied with the decision of the committee or if the committee is unable to reach consensus, the matter can be appealed to the Department Chair. In the case of disagreement with the decision, the advisor, instructor or student must put in writing the reasons why they believe that the decision should be re-examined. This must be submitted via e-mail within (10) business days of receiving notice from the Advancement Committee. The final decision regarding the student’s advancement rests with the Social Work Department Chair.

As noted in the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) by-laws, in order to pursue and be granted an appeal beyond the Social Work Department Chair, with the Dean of CCPA, there must be submitted a “written claim of abrogation of due process and/or new information”. In such cases as an appeal goes to the Dean, and as cited from the CCPA by-laws, “there will be no further recourse after the Dean’s decision.”

**Department of Social Work Grade Appeal Process and Procedure**

1. To appeal a final course grade, the student must put in writing the reasons why s/he believes that the grade should be changed, citing perceived unfairness in the grading process. The student must submit this written appeal via e-mail to the instructor-of-record for the course (field/ non-field) within ten 10 business days of receiving notice of the grade from the instructor-of-record or registrar – whichever is first.

2. Upon receipt of the written appeal, the instructor-of-record will consider the student’s appeal and respond to the student in writing within 20 business days with a final decision.
3. If the student is not satisfied with the instructor-of-record’s decision, the student must put in writing the reasons why s/he still believes that the grade should be changed, and attach a copy of the original document that was written to the instructor-of-record and the instructor’s response to this appeal. These documents must be forwarded via email to the Chair of the Social Work Grievance Committee within 10 business days following written notification from the instructor-of-record. If the Grievance Committee Chair is the instructor-of-record, then the appeal goes to the Department Chair.

4. The Grievance Committee Chair (or Department Chair if the Grievance Committee Chair is the instructor-of-record) will assign a Grade Appeal Committee within 5 working days that consists of 2 faculty (one of whom will serve as Chair of the Grade Appeal Committee), one professional staff and a student representative to review the student’s appeal. The student will be the President of the Social Work Graduate Student Organization (SW-GSO). If the President is not available, then the President will designate another SW-GSO Officer to serve. The Chair of the Grade Appeal Committee will schedule a meeting within 20 business days for the committee to review the documents submitted by the student and instructor of record. If further questions need to be answered prior to making a final determination the committee has the right to question the student, instructor or other relevant individuals in writing or by phone; when necessary the committee has the right to request more written material. Results from this appeal will be mailed to the instructor-of-record and student within 5 business days of a recommendation being reached.

5. If either the student or instructor-of-record is dissatisfied with the decision of the committee they may appeal the decision to the Department Chair. If the instructor-of-record is the Department Chair, then the final decision rests with the Grade Appeal Committee providing that committee’s decision is unanimous.

6. If the instructor-of-record is the Department Chair and the Grade Appeal Committee’s decision is not unanimous, then the Dean of the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) will review the written record and make the final determination.

7. As noted in the College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) by-laws, in order to pursue and be granted an appeal with the Dean of CCPA, there must be submitted a “written claim of abrogation of due process and/or new information”. In such cases as an appeal goes to the Dean, and as cited from the CCPA by-laws, “there will be no further recourse after the Dean's decision”.

Graduate Student Severance or Removal of Support

Graduate students who do not meet academic standards may be dropped from their graduate program according to the process described in the advancement policy.

Graduate students are subject to the rules governing academic life listed in the Binghamton University Bulletin. Accusations that students have committed acts of academic dishonesty may be brought before the CCPA Ethics and Integrity Committee, which issues a finding and a recommendation to the Assistant Dean of the College of Community and Public Affairs; the student receives a copy. A graduate student who is found to have violated the rules of academic integrity--who plagiarizes, cheats, or falsifies research data--is subject to suspension or expulsion. The CCPA Ethics and Integrity policies can be found at this link: http://www2.binghamton.edu/ccpa/community-involvement/pdfs/Approved%20CCPA%20Bylaws.pdf

Students may be involuntarily withdrawn from the University without academic penalty based on the recommendation of the Medical Director of the University Health Service or the Director of the University Counseling Center. "Without academic penalty" is defined as continuing as a student in good academic standing at the institution and eligible to return. Efforts are made to preserve a
student's academic progress with incomplete grades and/or withdrawals through consultation with faculty. If there are irreconcilable disagreements in these discussions, the Provost will make the final decision(s) about the disposition of the student's academic record. Recommendations for involuntary withdrawals are submitted to the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students for appropriate action. Students will be sent written notification of the intended action. Appeals of such action may be made in writing to the Vice President for Student Affairs within 10 business days. Students are not readmitted without a positive recommendation from either the Medical Director of the University Health Service or the Director of the University Counseling Center, and upon clearance by the Associate Vice President and Dean of Students.

All other recommendations to sever a student from the Graduate School or one of its programs, or to break a student's assistantship contract or to revoke a fellowship, tuition scholarship or other source of financial support, are made to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School, accompanied by appropriate documentation. The student should be informed of the basis for any such decision and can appeal it, using first the grievance procedure of the student's program and then, if needed, the appeals procedures of the Graduate Council Grievance Committee. Action on a recommendation to remove support from or to sever a student in good academic standing will await the outcome of the grievance procedure. (Approved by Graduate Council, April 6, 1998.)

Discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, disability, marital status or sexual orientation

Graduate students are protected by SUNY's "Grievance Procedure for Review of Allegations of Discrimination." A graduate student who believes that he or she has been discriminated against on the basis of any of the above, or that he or she has been subjected to sexual harassment, may get help, including information and documentation of the grievance procedure, by contacting the Affirmative Action Office (LSG – 663, 777-4775).

IV. Requests for Waivers of Graduate School Procedures and Regulations

Students with requests for waivers of Graduate School procedures or regulations should consult with and obtain approval from their graduate or program director. Approved requests go to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School who, in turn, may refer such requests to the Academic Standards Committee of the Graduate Council. (Examples of requests for waivers include: waivers of minimum GPA requirements, waivers of degree requirements, and extensions of Graduate School deadlines.)

General Information

MSW Graduate Student Organization

The MSW Graduate Student Organization is the student organization developed by and for graduate social work students to encourage broader acquaintances among social work students, to discuss academic and career interests, and to become further involved in the community. The extent to which the organization is able to accomplish its goals depends upon the level of interest and participation of the students themselves.

All MSW students are members of the organization and have the opportunity to participate in its functioning. The Student Organization provides students of the program occasions to gather at meetings on a regular basis throughout the year. Students serve in designated officer positions and meetings are student-driven. Members of the program, thus, have an opportunity and are encouraged to openly share ideas and interests, plan and organize events, and communicate questions or concerns regarding the program. The Student Organization aims to inform students of pertinent social work-related events and activities in the surrounding area.

The Student Organization receives funds from the University based on activity fees collected from all students.
Leave of Absence

Under exceptional situations, students may apply for a Leave of Absence by submitting a petition to the Department. This petition must be approved by the Department before it is forwarded to the Graduate School for final approval. Students on leave are excused from the registration requirement during the period of the leave. Leaves are normally granted for one semester with an extension of up to two regular semesters. A Leave of Absence is granted only in exceptional circumstances, such as illness or other unusual personal hardship, and requires detailed justification. Leaves of Absence are not granted to students who wish to absent themselves to undertake research or academic study elsewhere. If possible, requests for Leaves of Absence should be submitted one month prior to the semester for which the leave is requested.

Withdrawal

It is the policy of the Social Work Department that students who are considering withdrawing from the program meet their advisors to discuss the challenges they are facing and explore options that may help support their continuing in the program.

If a student wishes to withdraw from the program, they should take the following steps;

1. If the decision is made to withdraw, the student must complete the Graduate School withdrawal form. Withdrawals are reviewed and approved by the Graduate School.

Changing to full-time or part-time tracks

Part-time students who wish to transfer to the full-time curriculum should make their request known to the Director of Admissions and Student Services. Decisions on whether to approve such requests are determined by a first come, first serve basis and whether there is space available in the desired cohort.

Life Experience and Prior Work Experience

Academic credit is not given for life experience or previous work experience. This policy is clearly communicated to students in the program’s admissions materials.

Registration

In order to register, graduate students must pay all tuition and fees prior to the first day of classes. Even if all tuition and fees are covered by University sources, students must confirm their registration by the stated deadlines. Students enrolled in the MSW Program are required to pre-register after their first semester. Registration takes place through BU Brain (described below under Resources and Services for Students). Students are responsible for updating their contact information with the Department and University. Students should check their bills for accuracy.
Enrollment Policies

Review of Applications Policy

Policy and Rationale:

The admissions process consists of the selection of those applicants who best fit the program’s commitment to preparing students for social work practice in public and not-for-profit agency settings and in pursuing policies, practices, and services that promote social and economic justice for diverse client populations. Given the rigor of graduate social work education, the program seeks students who demonstrate adequate preparation for pursuing academic education and fieldwork at the graduate level. Due to the nature of the profession, if there is a concern by the committee regarding the appropriateness of the candidate for the profession, that person will not be admitted.

Procedure:

All materials submitted are forwarded to the Director of Admissions, who checks the applicant’s materials for completeness. Applications are not evaluated until all materials requested have been submitted. Once an application is complete, the Director of Admissions reviews the application and completes a qualifications summary. This document highlights key aspects of the application in an easily accessible format. Each file is then passed on to a second member of the Admissions Committee for a second independent review. Any concerns regarding the applicant’s academic ability, values, appropriateness for the field, or maturity/stability are noted. Both the Director of Admissions and the second reviewer can recommend acceptance, rejection, a hold on the application, or an interview with the student. All applicants will be asked to participate in an individual or group interview as part of the application process. Personal and/or group Interviews are conducted by the Director of Admissions with at least one additional faculty member and/or a practitioner member of the Admissions Committee present. Once tentative recommendations regarding admission have been made, the qualifications summary and admissions materials are forwarded to the Director of Admissions for further review and a final admissions decision.

In some years, the Department is able to offer applicants admission on a rolling basis. Admittance to the program on a rolling basis occurs when anticipated enrollment slots for the following fall are not filled by those applicants who submitted materials prior to the application deadline of February 1st.

In cases of rolling admission, the Director of Admissions reviews the application and forwards the names of applicants to all members of the Admissions Committee. This allows committee members to be aware of who is applying to the program and to offer feedback about these applicants, should they have any familiarity with the applicants. A decision on initial action, i.e., whether or not an interview is necessary, is made by the Director of Admissions in consultation with the Program Director. As with the regular admissions process, interviews are conducted by the Director of Admissions with at least one additional faculty member and/or a practitioner member of the Admissions Committee present. Those committee members present for the interview provide feedback to the Director of Admissions regarding their assessment of the applicant’s appropriateness for the program. The Director of Admissions and Program Director then make a final determination regarding admission.

Wait List

Policy and Rationale:

Admission to the MSW program is highly competitive. Class size is controlled to enhance student learning and to protect the integrity of the program. In the event that a student makes application for admission, is an acceptable candidate and space is unavailable, the student may be placed on a waiting list.
Waiver of Regulations and Requirements

Specified Graduate School regulations and/or program degree requirements may be waived by the Vice Provost/Dean in individual instances. A petition for such a waiver must be endorsed by the appropriate program graduate committee and graduate program director, who append their reasons for believing that the requested waiver would not result in a breach of the spirit of the specified regulation or requirement.

The University reserves the right to alter these regulations and requirements without notice, pending the publication of the next scheduled issue of this Bulletin.

Graduate Assistantships

Overview

Graduate assistantships offer students hands-on experiential learning opportunities, one-on-one instruction and mentoring with social work faculty members/professional staff, and work experience to prepare them for careers as professional social workers. In turn, faculty members/professional staff are provided with the opportunity to work one-on-one with graduate assistants in order to advance their research, scholarship, teaching and mentoring agendas as well as the mission of the Department of Social Work and its commitment to students. The Department of Social Work Graduate Assistantship Policies and Procedures are designed to maximize the success of the graduate assistantship experience for the benefit of the student, the faculty member/professional staff, and Department of Social Work. These policies and procedures supplement the information provided to the student by the Graduate School as well as provide structure and accountability in the graduate assistantship experience. This manual includes information regarding:

1. Selection of Graduate Assistants (GAs)
2. Assignment of GAs
3. Responsibilities of GA Supervisors
4. Responsibilities of GAs
5. GA Time & Attendance
6. Faculty/Professional Staff Evaluation of GAs
7. GA Reflections on the GA Experience
8. GA Dismissal Procedures
9. GA Forms

Selection of Graduate Assistants

Once applicants to the Masters of Social Work (MSW) Program are admitted, they complete the Application for Graduate Assistantship in the Department of Social Work if they are interested in a graduate assistantship. This form asks them to provide demographic information as well as degrees earned, honors/awards, special areas of study (i.e., advanced certificates), relevant work skills they will bring to the graduate assistantship, such as computer skills and library skills, and a current resume. This form in conjunction with the admissions application is used to determine the final selection of GAs.
Using the Graduate Assistantship Criteria Worksheet, the Director of Admissions and Student Services will review each GA application. The following criteria are used to rank each applicant: financial need; undergraduate GPA and institution; previous work experience; previous volunteer experience; quality of GA application; membership in underrepresented group; and special considerations. Once all applications are reviewed and ranked, the Director of Admissions and Student Services submits the recommended list of graduate assistant appointments to the Department Chairperson, who will give final approval for the appointments. Students receive official confirmation of their awards and necessary GA paperwork from the Dean's Office, College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA).

Assignment of Graduate Assistants

Faculty members and professional staff will complete the Faculty Request for Graduate Assistant Form to be considered for appointment of GAs. The forms will be submitted to the Director of Admissions and Student Services no later than the last day of the spring semester to ensure that they receive full consideration. The Faculty Request Form, which will be used to match GAs and faculty members, asks for information about the faculty members’ current research, scholarship and teaching/curriculum needs for the upcoming year as well as information about the skill sets they are looking for in a GA. Faculty members/professional staff requesting a GA who already have been assigned a first year GA will be assigned the same GA for the second year except under extraordinary circumstances (i.e., dismissal of GA for poor job performance). The resumes of GAs that are a possible fit for faculty members who need to be assigned new GAs will be distributed to faculty members/professional staff for review and ranking to ensure the best match between faculty members/professional staff and GAs.

Students will be notified regarding GA assignments no later than one week prior to the start of the fall semester.

Responsibilities of GA Supervisors

GA Supervisors are expected to:

1. Establish 10 hour a week work schedules with students that takes into account the students course and field placement schedule as well as their GA needs;

2. Establish weekly supervision meetings in-person, by phone, or through e-mail communication, to assign projects, discuss progress of projects, provide necessary instruction for projects, and offer mentoring;

3. Provide clear instructions for all assigned tasks, activities, and projects and the needed training and resources to complete the work;
4. Provide ongoing supervision, instruction, and mentoring;

5. Complete the GA Performance Evaluation forms each semester and schedule appointments to discuss these with GAs.

Responsibilities of GAs

The responsibilities described here supplement those outlined in The Graduate School and Human Resources Forms that GAs complete when they accept graduate assistantships. GAs are expected to:

1. Establish 10 hour a week work schedules that accommodate their course and field placement schedules as well as the needs of the GA supervisors. Students can be required to work at the UDC, or may be able to work off campus, depending on supervisors’ needs and required resources to complete tasks;

2. Arrive to work on time and dressed appropriately. Changes in work schedules and expected absences must be approved by the GAs’ supervisors. Unexpected absences must be immediately reported to the GA supervisor and the Department Secretary, Amy Edwards at 607-777-5999 or aedwards@binghamton.edu.

3. Complete tasks, activities, and projects on time and as instructed;

4. Ask for direction and further clarification from GA supervisors when necessary;

5. Attend all scheduled meetings with the GA supervisors;

6. Complete Attendance and Sick Leave Records as required by Human Resources.

7. Complete and submit the Graduate Assistant Reflections on GA Experience form each semester of the graduate assistantship.

GA Attendance & Sick Leave Record

As all New York State Employees, GAs are required to account for their time. At the end of every month, GAs should record their time and have their supervisors sign their attendance and sick leave records. At the end of the semester, the completed time and attendance forms should be submitted to Human Resources. The Attendance and Sick Leave Record as well as instructions
Faculty/Professional Staff Evaluation of GAs

Each semester, GA supervisors will complete evaluations of their GAs’ performance using the Social Work Department’s Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form. The forms will be completed by GA supervisors and discussed with GAs at an agreed upon time during the last two weeks of each semester of the GA work commitment period. GAs and GA supervisors will formally meet to discuss the evaluations. After discussion, the evaluation forms should be signed by both GAs and GA supervisors. Then, the forms are submitted to Brian Flynn, Director of Student Services and Admissions NO LATER than the last day of class.

GA Reflections on GA Experience

At the end of each semester, GAs will complete the Social Work Department’s Graduate Assistant Reflection on Experience form. GAs are encouraged, but not required, to share these forms with GA supervisors. Forms are submitted to Brian Flynn, Director of Student Services and Admissions NO LATER than the last day of class.

GA Forms

Application for Graduate Assistantship in the Department of Social Work

Faculty Request for Graduate Assistant Form

Graduate Assistant Evaluation Form

Graduate Assistant Reflection on Experience

Graduate/Teaching Assistant Attendance and Sick and Leave Record (available through Human Resources)
Resources and Services for Students

The BU Brain

https://bubrain.binghamton.edu/

The Binghamton University BU BRAIN Portal provides secure access to online tools and resources for students, faculty and staff. BU BRAIN will be used by all Binghamton University community members to perform grading, review schedules, access student records and perform Student Accounts and Financial Aid Services transactions.

Computing Services and Educational Technology

The Computing Services and Educational Technology Center, located on-line at http://computing.binghamton.edu, provides information and resources regarding student e-mail access, software available to students, computing facilities, and technology training. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with this site prior to the start of classes.

The Writing Center

Students needing assistance with writing skills can seek such assistance through the Writing Center free of cost. The Writing Center is located in LN1209 and is open Monday thru Thursday 10-5, Monday and Wednesday 6-8, and Friday 10-3. Interested students can contact the Writing Center at 777-6725.

The Career Development Center

The Career Development Center, located on-line at http://cdc.binghamton.edu, provides information and resources regarding the skills and competencies needed for career success. The CDC assists undergraduate and graduate students and alumni.

Services for Students with Disabilities

The Office for Services for Students with Disabilities is located in LH-B51. Complete information can be found on their website, http://ssd.binghamton.edu/ or by calling 777-2686.

ID Cards

Specific information regarding student ID cards will be forthcoming from the Graduate Office. During the regular academic year and summer, ID cards are handled through the Office of the Registrar. Special schedules will be set to accommodate students entering in the fall semester.

Financial Aid

Students seeking financial aid should contact the Financial Aid and Employment Office at 777-2428 or visit the website at http://bingfa.binghamton.edu/. The website lists a number of financial aid opportunities open specifically to graduate students.

Campus Preschool and Early Childhood Center
The Campus Preschool is located in the building adjacent to the East Gymnasium near the main entrance to campus. Interested persons should call 777-2696 or go to the website at http://urel.binghamton.edu/Buildings/Preschool/Preschool.html.

Counseling Center

The Counseling Center is located diagonally across from the main entrance of the Glenn G. Bartle Library in LN1202. Interested persons should call 777-2772 or go to the website at http://counseling.binghamton.edu/.

Multicultural Resource Center

The Multicultural Resource Center serves as a primary resource for coordination of Binghamton University's multicultural initiatives, including, but not limited to, the development and implementation of conferences, seminars, training programs, and workshops. MRC is located in the University Union, Room 258. Information about events, resources, and associated student organizations can be found at http://mrc.binghamton.edu/. Information about student organizations can also be found at http://www.binghamton.edu/home/student/cultural.html.

Recreation and Fitness

The Fit Space is located in the West Gymnasium on campus and offers a variety of options to faculty, staff, students and community members to use the various facilities and equipment. Specific information can be access online at http://campusrecreation.binghamton.edu/.

Parking Services

All students must register their vehicles on campus unless they plan to pay for parking at one of the Downtown parking ramps. Students may apply for parking permits online at http://parking.binghamton.edu/regs.htm, or in person at the Information Booth (located alongside the main drive entrance to the university). Parking permits can also be obtained at the Parking Services office in the basement of the Couper Administration Building. Parking is available in the UDC parking lot and a University issued student parking ID is necessary in order to park in the UDC lot.
Appendix A: Social Work Contract

College of Community and Public Affairs
MSW Program

Social Work Contract

I agree to the following academic contract:

Social workers serve a wide variety of client systems that could include the poor, victims, as well as perpetrators of abuse, people with different sexual orientations, those with racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds, people of all ages, persons from diverse religious, spiritual and cultural backgrounds, and many other aspects of human diversity. Social work services should be provided without prejudice and/or imposition of the worker's values on clients.

I have read and understand the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics and agree to adhere to the standards therein.

I have read the Binghamton University Department of Social Work Performance Standards for Admission, Matriculation and Graduation, and agree to adhere to the standards therein.

I will continue my professional development through regular self-assessment of my academic and personal aptitude and performance.

I will continue my professional development through regular faculty assessment of my academic and professional aptitude and performance.

I understand and agree that the faculty and staff may share with other faculty, staff, and administrators information about student situations in connection with professional development and academic concerns arising in the social work program. Faculty and staff will make every effort to keep confidential any student information that the faculty or staff member feels is not necessary to discuss concerning the student in connection with professional development and academic concerns. As appropriate, faculty and staff will discuss with students the scope of the information that is being shared.

I will become familiar with all course and program requirements and accept responsibility for taking all required courses in the correct sequence.

I understand that although I am admitted to the MSW Program, if my professional development is not deemed satisfactory by the social work faculty, the MSW Program has the right and responsibility to request reassessment of my suitability for the program. The social work faculty, in turn will provide academic instruction and professional advising to assist with the learning and professional development process.

Student's Name: ________________________________
Student's Signature: ___________________________ Date: ________________