

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM



GRADUATE STUDENT HANDBOOK

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Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU) Mission Statement

Mississippi Valley State University, as a Carnegie Classified Master's University, provides comprehensive undergraduate and graduate programs in education, the arts and sciences, and professional studies. The University is driven by its commitment to excellence in teaching, learning, service, and research--a commitment resulting in a learner-centered environment that prepares critical thinkers, exceptional communicators, and service-oriented, engaged, and productive citizens. MVSU is fundamentally committed to positively impacting the quality of life and creating extraordinary educational opportunities for the Mississippi Delta and beyond.

SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program prepares students for professional social work practice. The child and family welfare specialty prepares students to become practitioners within a rural context. Upon completion of the program, students will have gained the specialized knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes to work with individuals, families, groups, and organizations within the unique cultural characteristics often found in rural communities.

Embedded in the rural landscape of the Mississippi Delta are social problems such as high poverty rates, inadequate housing, inadequate health care, scarcity of resources, and physical distance from services and transportation. The Social Work Program at Mississippi Valley State University has a commitment to excellence in the preparation of students as professional social workers skilled to address these rural social concerns. Although the program's specialized knowledge, skills, values, and cognitive and affective processes focuses on practice with children and families in rural communities, all of the aforementioned can be transferred to other settings.

The purpose of this MSW Student Handbook is to assist graduate social work students during their enrollment at Mississippi Valley State University (MVSU). It contains an overview of the department and information on admission, curriculum, academic and professional standards, advisement, evaluations, and grievance procedures that govern all students from admission to

graduation.

Information on students' rights and responsibilities and MSW student organizations are also included. The handbook provides the student a useful blueprint for successfully completing the Master of Social Work Degree at MVSU.

Overview of the Department of Social Work

Historical Background

The Institute for Higher Learning of the State of Mississippi (IHL) and the College Board initially approved a master's degree in social work program to be jointly administered by MVSU and Delta State University in 1997. Delta State eventually decided not to pursue a MSW program and MVSU began preparations for the only graduate social work program in north Mississippi. Our first community meeting designed to gauge levels of support for, and interest in a graduate social work program at MVSU was held in the Spring of 2003. An Education Specialist from CSWE was present at this meeting and informed the public of the process necessary for MVSU to begin a master's program in social work. We met again with community social workers in April 2004.

In 2005, the MSW program was established with a concentration in Child Welfare and Gerontology. In 2007, the gerontology program was discarded because the support for it lagged far behind that of the child welfare. Although the program had not been conferred full accreditation status by the Commission of Accreditation for CSWE, under the direction of Dr. Baxter Wright, the MSW program successfully graduated eight students, six of whom completed in advanced standing. In June of 2009, the Commission on Accreditation for CSWE conferred full accreditation status of the MSW Program, retroactive to the admission of the first class in 2005. Dr. Vincent J. Venturini was the Department Chair and Dr. Barbara Newsome was the MSW Program Director at the time of the official accreditation conferment.

In February of 2013, the program received its reaffirmation of accreditation. Dr. Catherine Singleton-Walker was the Chair of the Department and Dr. Cynthia Honore'-

Collins was the newly appointed MSW Program Director. In the past decade, the program continues to promote social work professional values, provide implicit and explicit curriculum, and educate students in the field of Social Work with a specialty of Family and Child Welfare, particularly in rural environments.

Social Work Values and Ethics

The MSW curriculum is organized around the core values of the social work profession. These values, which are presented in the *Code of Ethics* of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), include: a) service; b) social justice; c) dignity and worth of the person; d) importance of human relationships; e) integrity; and f) competence. Together, they form the “foundation of social work’s unique purpose and perspective.” Principle values include:

Value: *Service*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers’ primary goal is to help people in need and to address social problems.*

Social workers elevate service to others above self-interest. Social workers draw on their knowledge, values, and skills to help people in need and to address social problems. Social workers are encouraged to volunteer some portion of their professional skills with no expectation of significant financial return (pro bono service).

Value: *Social Justice*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers challenge social influence*

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

Value: *Dignity and Worth of the Person*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers respect the inherent dignity and worth of the person*

Social workers treat each person in a caring and respectful fashion, mindful of individual differences and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers promote clients’ socially responsible

self-determination. Social workers seek to enhance clients' capacity and opportunity to change and to address their own needs. Social workers are cognizant of their dual responsibility to clients and to the broader society. They seek to resolve conflicts between clients' interests and the broader society's interests in a socially responsible manner consistent with the values, ethical principles and ethical standards of the profession.

Value: *Importance of Human Relationships*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers recognize the central importance of human relationships*

Social workers understand that relationships between and among people are an important vehicle for change. Social workers engage people as partners in the helping process. Social workers seek to strengthen relationships among people in a purposeful effort to promote, restore, maintain, and enhance the well-being of individual, families, social groups, organizations, and communities.

Value: *Integrity*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers behave in a trustworthy manner.*

Social workers are continually aware of the profession's mission, values, ethical principles, and ethical standards and practice in a manner consistent with them. Social workers act honestly and responsibly and promote ethical practices on the part of the organizations with which they are affiliated.

Value: *Competence*

Ethical Principle: *Social workers practice within their areas of competence and develop and enhance their professional expertise.*

Social workers continually strive to increase their professional knowledge and skills and to apply them in practice. Social workers should aspire to contribute to the knowledge base of the profession. <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

MSW Mission Statement

The Master of Social Work (MSW) Program prepares students for professional social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Through the curriculum, the program instills in students advanced social work knowledge, values, skills, including cognitive and affective processes in a manner which enables students to work with diverse populations in a wide range of

settings. Concurrently, the program has a specialty of Child and Family Welfare with emphasis on social work practice with impoverished people living in rural regions, such as the Mississippi Delta, where the University is located and committed to serve.

MSW Program Goals

The goals of the Master of Social Work Program are:

1. Educate students for advanced- level social work positions in practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
2. Provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills for working with diverse populations, including oppressed, marginalized, and rural populations.
3. Instill in students a professional social work identity and the values and ethics of the profession.

Core and Rural Competencies

Mississippi Valley State University’s MSW Program has incorporated the nine (9) core competencies outlined in the 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), as set forth by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Three additional competencies have been added to address the rural context of social work practice: one competency serves our generalist practice courses and the other two serve our specialized courses. “The 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) outlines nine (9) core competencies that are common to all of social work practice. Each competency describes the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that comprise the competency at the generalist level of practice, followed by a set of behaviors that integrate these components. These behaviors represent observable components of the competencies, while the preceding statements represent the underlying content and processes that inform the behaviors. MVSU advanced practice, incorporates all of the core competencies augmented by knowledge, value, skills, and cognitive and affective processes specific to the Child Welfare specialization.

(<https://cswe.org/getattachment/Accreditation/Standards-and-Policies/2015-EPAS/2015EPASandGlossary.pdf.aspx>) **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that

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

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

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic,

political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. Social workers:

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

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. Social workers:

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

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:

- Use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- Apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research

methods and research findings; and

- Use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. Social workers:

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

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:

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

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

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

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-

informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration. Social workers:

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

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. Social workers:

- Select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;

- Critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- Apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Rural Competency 10

Utilize appropriate practice intervention within a rural setting;

Rural communities present challenges that are not usually seen in urban communities. Many rural communities operate mostly with informal service delivery systems, such as churches, schools, fundraising and/or sporting events. Rural areas usually have fewer upward mobility opportunities, suffer from the lack of specialized professionals (Medical doctors, psychologist, social workers, nurses, etc.) and insufficient resources than urban centers. Rural communities are usually underserved, have a high persistent concentration of poverty and are geographically isolated. That geographic isolation may account for less attraction to the area for businesses and professionals alike. Social workers must be aware that rural areas are usually closed communities, thus not welcoming to outsiders.

Rural Social Worker

- Seek to identify and understand cultural norms, service delivery systems, and the strengths of rural communities;
- Understand practice on the micro, mezzo, macro levels within the rural setting; and
- Employ social work values and ethics within rural settings.

Rural Competency 11

Demonstrate rural knowledge and skills to apply the bio-psychosocial-cultural-spiritual perspective in specialized social work practice with children and families

Rural social workers utilize practice knowledge and skills to assess and intervene with children and families within a rural setting. They apply knowledge and skills to apply bio-psychosocial-cultural-spiritual perspective. They apply knowledge and skills to conduct ongoing assessments and intervention for children and families within a rural context.

Rural Social Workers

- Demonstrate rural knowledge and skills to apply the bio-psychosocial-cultural-spiritual perspective in specialized social work practice with children and families;
- Demonstrate a high level of assessment knowledge and skills utilizing the ecological and the person in the environment (PIE) perspective with children and families within a rural setting; and
- Apply knowledge of practice in the micro, mezzo, and macro levels within a rural setting.

Rural Competency 12

Synthesize knowledge of rural values and customs and apply to autonomous social work practice with children and families.

Practitioners with a specialization in rural social work recognize, respect and exhibit knowledge of the relevant concepts and theoretical framework for practice with children and families in rural areas. They exhibit the ability to utilize the ethical principles included in the NASW Code of Ethics, particularly as it relates to dual relationships. They display appropriate critical thinking and decision making when analyzing policies and programs that are detrimental to the quality of life of rural children and families. Their practice decisions and conceptual frameworks are shaped by the rural values, customs, habits, skills, ideology language and political behavior of the residents of the rural community. The rural social worker engages in self-regulation, self-reflection, supervision and consultation to ensure that the relevant knowledge, skills and values are utilized. Practitioners in rural areas advocate for their clients to combat the disproportionately high rates of poverty, unemployment, underemployment, inadequate housing, trauma, racism and other forms of social and economic injustice.

Rural Social Workers:

- Seek to identify solutions that address problems and concerns by incorporating community strengths and assets;
- Utilize innovative research-based programs and activities that incorporate the entire life cycle;
- Select appropriate intervention modalities, after engaging in self-reflection on the culture and values of the rural community;
- And Advocate for a responsive health and social service delivery system that addresses the current structural inequities.

The Conceptual Framework for the Specialized Curriculum

The conceptual model that underscores instruction in the specialized curriculum is the ecosystems perspective, augmented by the strengths and empowerment approaches to social work practice within a rural context. The ecosystems perspective is especially suited for social work in a rural context, given the nature and scope of rural practice. Rural social work refers to practice with persons living in rural areas, as well as social work with institutions located in rural communities.

The ecosystems model uses elements of systems theory and the ecological perspective to create an approach that looks at the dynamic interactions that occur among various micro, mezzo and macro level systems. Social workers use this perspective “to order and comprehend complexity and avoid oversimplification and reductionism” (Meyer, 2002). It therefore provides a convenient and useful framework through which social workers “can comprehend diversity and the relationships between humans and their environment” (Miley, O’Melia and Dubois, 1998, p. 46).

The ecosystems perspective allows social workers to understand the client’s reality when separating the personal issues from the more public situations. Social workers practicing in rural areas and small communities must understand the influence of the rural environment upon the problems experienced by families and children, as well as other diverse and at-risk populations. They must also recognize, understand, and utilize those rural institutions that provide support and problem-solving capacities to clients.

Augmenting the ecosystems perspective are the strengths perspective and the empowerment approach to social work practice. The Strengths Perspective stresses “the human capacity for resiliency, courage, strength in the face of adversity, ingenuity in accessing and creating resources, and the right of individuals to form their own aspirations and definitions of their situations” (Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda, 2006, p. 18). This approach challenges the social worker to look not only at presenting problems, but at the potentials that exist in the client’s situation, including individual strengths and environmental resources. Using the strengths approach, the worker-client relationship becomes “a collaborative process depending on clients

and workers to be purposeful agents and not mere functionaries (Saleeby, 2006, p. 1). Students need to understand that both rural communities and citizens possess certain strengths that may be helpful to practitioners. Scales and Streeter (2004) wrote that “failure to recognize and identify the considerable strengths and resources of rural people and communities can constitute a barrier to effective social work” (p. 38).

The strengths approach calls upon the worker and the client to incorporate into the helping process the identification and utilization of the strengths in both the client and the environment. The strengths perspective stresses “the human capacity for resiliency, courage, strength in the face of adversity, ingenuity in accessing and creating resources and the right of individuals to form their own aspirations and definitions of their situations”(Robbins, Chaterjee and Canada, 2006). This approach challenges the social worker to look not only at presenting problems but at the potential that exists in the client’s situations, including individual strengths and environmental resources. Using the strengths approach, the worker-client relationship becomes “a collaborative process depending on clients and workers to be purposeful agents and not mere functionaries (Saleeby, 2006). Students need to understand that both clients and rural communities have strengths that may be helpful in resolving issues. As noted by Scales and Streeter (2004), “failure to recognize and identify the considerable strengths and resources of rural people and communities can constitute a barrier to effective social work.”

An empowerment approach in social work practice is used to help individuals who are members of devalued groups, as well as the collective group membership, to shed their feelings of powerlessness and to take greater control over their lives. As a helping model, “it is relevant to generalist, advanced generalist, and integrated practice curricula as well as to specialized advanced year methods preparation” (Lee, 2001, p. 6). It is thus an appropriate model to include in our conceptual framework.

The Framework of Rural Social Work Practice

Rural social work may be defined as the practice of social work in any setting identified by those present in the area as rural. This may include farming, mining, fishing, logging, or ranching communities and small towns and villages of many

types. <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195389678/obo-9780195389678-0119.xml> Citizens of Mississippi in general and the state's delta region, more specifically, are a rural people. The Delta contains no true metropolitan areas and the people who live in the more populated communities of Greenville, Clarksdale, Greenwood and Cleveland maintain a largely rural identity. The communities of the Delta are marked by high levels of joblessness, poverty, inadequate public transportation systems, a reduced availability of professional services and inadequate economic development. <https://cup.columbia.edu/book/rural-social-work-practice/9780231129336>

The ecosystems perspective of social work practice provides a suitable theoretical base for understanding the strengths and problems associated with client situations in a rural area. When students begin the specialized curriculum, they will gain knowledge and skills in providing specialized assessments of problems with rural populations as well as how to employ more individualized interventions for specific clients.

<https://www.jacksonfreepress.com/news/2017/dec/20/interrupting-poverty-cycle-looking-back-move-forwa/>

SECTION II: SOCIAL WORK CURRICULUM

Overview

The curriculum of the Master of Social Work Program is grounded in the liberal arts and the concept of the person in environment (PIE) and contains an integrated foundation in social work practice. The Master of Social Work Program prepares students for professional social work generalist practice in rural communities with a specialty in child and family welfare.

Sixty semester hours are required to earn the Master's Degree in Social Work from MVSU. The full-time program includes four regular semesters (2 Fall & 2 Spring) and one Summer semester or two academic years to complete 60 semester hours. The advanced standing program includes two (2) Spring and one (1) Fall semester or one and a half years to complete 30 semester hours.

The first thirty-three hours in the curriculum comprise the "professional generalist curriculum."

Students gain an in-depth knowledge of generalist practice during this period. This phase of the curriculum includes 450 clock hours (6 credit hours) of internship and a field seminar (3 credit hours) over the Summer semester. Classroom courses include six hours of human behavior in the social environment, three hours of research, three hours of social welfare services and policy, three hours of social work theory, three hours of diversity and six hours of social work practice content. Content on diversity, social and economic justice and populations at risk are infused throughout the generalist courses. The final twenty-seven hours make up the specialized curriculum. Courses focus on child and family welfare and include 450 clock hours (6 credit hours) of advanced internship and an (3 hours) integration seminar.

To accommodate a wide range of student needs, the MSW program of study offers the following two options: Advanced Standing Program requires 30 credit hours, and a Full-time Two Year Program. All MSW students will follow the same learning expectations for field education and meet the same requirements for graduation. MSW students in the Advanced Standing Program are only required to complete Field Seminar II and Field Internship II. Courses are offered in the traditional classroom settings, on-line and in a hybrid format (combination of traditional classroom and on-line).

The Master of Social Work Program at MVSU does not grant social work course credit for life or work experience. Applicants to the MSW Program will not be required to duplicate course content in the professional generalist curriculum if proficiency can be demonstrated. Students may be exempt from courses in the generalist curriculum that represent duplication of course content previously taken by passing proficiency examinations.

Generalist Courses

The generalist practice courses enable students to master the use of the generalist perspective when performing specialized social work practice with children and families across a range of social systems.

Definition of Specialized Social Work Practice

Specialized social work practice builds upon the professional generalist practice of social work in that it requires the practitioner to apply knowledge and skills of a generalist social work perspective to specialized practice with families and children. Workers at the specialized level

should be more autonomous and should demonstrate a greater depth, breadth, and specificity in work with children and families. They should intervene with multiple systems simultaneously and determine the appropriate practice approach. They must also demonstrate the ability to assess complex problems and to integrate multiple theories and skills into interventions.

In the specialized curriculum the student learns to engage in research to improve social work practice, to critically evaluate one's own practice and to contribute to the profession's knowledge building efforts. Furthermore, students must demonstrate leadership in child and family welfare services. Students in the specialized curriculum will engage in program and policy development, research, administration, supervision, and critical analyses of practice models in child and family welfare services.

Generalist Curriculum

The generalist practice curriculum provides evidence-based knowledge, behaviors, and skills for social work practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities with emphasis on rural content. The specialized practice curriculum allows students to extend the basic knowledge gained in the generalist practice to specialized evidence-based practice with families and children within rural areas. Both the generalist and specialized portions of the program emphasize evidence-based practice and cognitive and affective processes.

Students must follow a structured program of study that includes all of the following generalist practice courses (33 credit hours):

- SW 500 Social Work Practice I (3)
- SW 501 Social Work Practice II (3)
- SW 512 Social Welfare Policy & Services (3)
- SW 520 Human Behavior in the Social Environment I (3)
- SW SW521 Human Behavior in the Social Environment II (3)
- SW 522 Social Work Theory and Methods (3)
- SW 531 Methods of Social Work Research (3)
- SW 540 Diversity: Micro, Mezzo & Macro Applications (3)
- SW 580 Field Practice Seminar I (3)
- SW 581 Field Internship I (6)

Specialized Practice Curriculum

The MSW program at Mississippi Valley State University offers a single specialized practice: Specialized Practice in Child and Family Welfare.

The goal of the specialized practice is to advance the generalist content in a manner that prepares students to utilize evidence-based, ethically informed social work practices to help children and families promote, restore, and maintain social functioning. The knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by students in the specialized curriculum are designed to produce advanced social work practitioners who have the skills for ethically informed social work practice including advanced assessment, relationship building/enhancement, application of goal-oriented and evidence-based interventions, evaluation of practice, and lifelong professional development. Upon successful completion of all generalist courses, students move to the specialized curriculum, which includes all the following courses (27 credit hours).

- SW600 Advanced Social Work Practice with Children and Families: Direct Practice (3)
- SW610 Family and Child Welfare Policy (3)
- SW615 Advanced Social Work with Children and Families: Indirect Practice (3)
- SW620 Rural Social Work (3)
- SW630 Mental Health: Assessment and Intervention (3)
- SW650 Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation (3)
- SW680 Field Practice Seminar II (3)
- SW681 Field Internship II (6)

Advanced Standing Program

Students accepted in the Advanced Standing Program will attend on a full-time basis to complete the program in three (3) semesters or one year completing 30 credit hours. All Advanced Standing students will begin in the Spring semester. Students registered in the advance program must register for nine (9) to twelve (12) hours per semester and follow the academic map established for the advance standing program. All students must work closely with their assigned advisor. The Advanced Standing Program academic map is below.

Semester I

SPRING	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
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SW 540 – Diversity: Micro, Mezzo, Macro Application			3
SW 600 - Advanced Social Work Practice with children and families: Direct Practice			3
SW 610 – Family and Child Welfare Policy			3
SW 620 – Rural Social Work			3
Total hours			12

Semester II

FALL	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 615 - Advanced Social Work Practice with children and families: Indirect Practice			3
SW 630 – Mental Health: Assessment and Intervention			3
SW 650 – Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation			3
Total hours			9

Semester III

SPRING	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 680 – Field Practice Seminar II			3
SW 681 – Field Internship II			6
Total hours			9

Full-time Two-Year Program

For the Full-Time Two-Year Program, students must enter with an overall 2.5 GPA from undergraduate studies. The full-time MSW student will complete the program in two years or five (5) academic semesters. Student must maintain a 3.0 GPA or above to remain in good academic standing with the program and the university. Students registered in the full-time two-year program must register for twelve (12) to fifteen (15) hours per semester and follow the academic map established for the two-year program. All generalist courses must be completed before moving forward with specialized courses. All prerequisite requirements must be followed. All students must work closely with their assigned advisor. See Full-time academic map below.

Semester I

FALL	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 500 – Social Work Practice I			3
SW 512 – Social Welfare Policy			3

SW 520 – Human Behavior in the Social Environment I			3
SW 531 - Research			3
Total hours			12

Semester II

SPRING	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 501 – Social Work Practice II			3
SW 521 – Human Behavior in the Social Environment II			3
SW 522 - Social Work Theory & Methods			3
SW 540 – Diversity: Micro, Mezzo, Macro Application			3
Total hours			12

Semester III

SUMMER I	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 580 – Field Seminar			3
SW 581 – Field Internship			6
Total hours			9

Semester IV

FALL	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 600 – Advanced Social Work Practice with children and families: Direct Practice			3
SW 610 – Family and Child Welfare Policy			3
SW 615 - Advanced Social Work Practice with children and families: Indirect Practice			3
SW 620 – Rural Social Work			3
SW 630 – Mental Health: Assessment and Intervention			3
Total hours			15

Semester V

SPRING	Semester/Year	Grade	Hours
SW 650 – Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation			3
SW 680 – Field Practice Seminar II			3
SW 681 – Field Internship II			6
Total hours			12

Field Placement Process

At Mississippi Valley State University, the field internship consists of four different courses; two courses for the generalist level, SW 580 Field Practice Seminar I and SW 581 Field Internship I; and two courses for the specialized level, SW 680 Field Seminar II and SW 681 Field Internship II. All students must have a 3.0 GPA in Social Work courses to enroll in the Generalist Practice or Specialized Field Internship and Seminar courses.

For the generalist and specialized placement students will collaborate with the MSW Field Coordinator in selecting the agency for placement. However, the assignment of placement ultimately will be made by the MSW Field Coordinator.

Each field seminar is three (3) credit hours and each field internship is six (6) credit hours, but the actual hours of placement per week vary based on the placement and availability of the student. The student will complete a total of 900 hours in their field internship.(450 hours each)

Grades for field placement will be assigned by the MSW Coordinator of Field Placement but will be based largely on the evaluation of the field instructor at the agency to which the student is assigned for placement. As a part of the field seminar, student will participate in classroom and online discussion and complete relevant assignments during the semester. The student's participation in the seminar is intended to foster their learning experiences involved in doing field placement and will be a factor in the student's grade.

Professional Liability Insurance

Social work students entering field internship must show proof of liability insurance. Students can purchase liability insurance through the National Association of Social Workers (NASW); membership in NASW is required. Students may also purchase liability insurance from other carriers. Coverage of 1,000,000 is required.

Field Education: Structure, Function and Organization

Educational Perspective and the Role of Field Education

Mississippi Valley State University's Department of Social work is dedicated to the improvement

of human life. Students are provided with necessary theory and practice skills to assist diverse populations with complex problems. Using the generalist perspective during the foundation year of study and an ecosystems approach during the second year of study, students assess the needs and coping abilities of people in their environments. Through the integration of class and field practice, students are trained to practice social work with children and families within a rural context.

The Field Education Program plays a pivotal role in student education. It is in the field education experience that students can test theory and knowledge learned in the classroom as well as further develop their skills, professional competence, and professional identity. Field education includes skills building, upholding standards of professional ethics and engaging in evidence-based practice. The overall goal of field education is to produce a professional social worker capable of engaging in specialized social work practice with children and families. Field education is viewed as a unique partnership between the Department of Social Work and a broad array of community agencies. Together, the Department of Social Work and the field agencies plan, implement and monitor a field education experience for each individual student. Through ongoing communication, the Department of Social Work and field agencies work toward the development of a shared educational philosophy and standards regarding field education, field placements, and student performance.

Structure and Function of the Field Education Program

The essential components of the Field Education Program are the:

- a. Field Instruction Curriculum as articulated in SW 580 Field Practice Seminar I, SW 581 Field Internship I, required at the end of the first year of study; and SW 680 Field Practice Seminar II, and SW 681 Field Internship II, required during the final semester of the MSW Program;
- b. Field Personnel consisting of the MSW Field Coordinator, field instructors and field liaisons;
- c. Field Agencies;
- d. Student Interns; and
- e. Field Advisory Committee

Each of these components are addressed in detail in the Field Instruction Manual.

Educational Perspective and the Role of Field Education

Mississippi Valley State University's Department of Social work is dedicated to the improvement of human life. Students are provided with necessary theory and practice skills to assist diverse populations with complex problems. Using the generalist perspective during the specialized year of study and an ecosystems approach during the second year of study, students assess the needs and coping abilities of people in their environments. Through the integration of class and field practice, students are trained to practice social work with children and families within a rural context.

The Field Education Program plays a pivotal role in student education. It is in the field education experience that students can test theory and knowledge learned in the classroom as well as further develop their skills, professional competence and professional identity. Field education includes skills building, upholding standards of professional ethics and engaging in evidence-based practice. The overall goal of field education is to produce a professional social worker capable of engaging in advanced social work practice with children and families. Field education is viewed as a unique partnership between the Department of Social Work and a broad array of community agencies. Together, the Department of Social Work and the field agencies plan, implement and monitor a field education experience for each individual student. Through ongoing communication, the Department of Social Work and field agencies work toward the development of a shared educational philosophy and standards regarding field education, field placements, and student performance.

(For more detailed Field Seminar and Internship information, see Field Manual)

SECTION III: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Admissions

Regular Admission

The criteria for admission are as follows:

1. The applicant must hold a baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university.
2. The applicant must be eligible to re-enter the last college or university s/he attended in good standing.
3. The applicant must provide an official transcript showing a cumulative grade

point average of at least 2.75 on all undergraduate study, or a minimum grade point average of 3.0 on the last 60 semester hours of study. The GPA must be based upon a 4.0-point scale.

4. The applicant must submit three references from persons familiar with the applicant's fitness for graduate school and character. Two of the references must be from a professional (for example, a professor or supervisor).
5. The applicant must submit a two-page typed essay on why s/he would like to be a social worker. The applicant's response should reflect their motivation for social work education, capacities for professional social work and a major social concern.
6. The applicant must complete applications for admissions to the MSW Program and to the Graduate School.
7. The MSW Program does not grant social work course credit for life and work experience.
8. An interview with the Social Work Admissions Committee may be required.

Advanced Standing

Admission to the Advanced Standing Program of the MSW Program is determined on a selective basis using the following criteria:

1. Applicant must be a graduate of a Council on Social Work Education accredited baccalaureate program within the past five years.
2. A letter grade of "B" or better in all social work courses and must be evident on the official transcript submitted from the college or university where the applicant earned his/her baccalaureate degree in social work.
3. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better on a 4.0 scale for undergraduate coursework.
4. The MSW Program does not grant social work course credit for life and work experience.
5. An interview with the Admissions Committee may be required.

Advanced standing students must complete thirty semester hours in social work. This includes the following:

1. SW540, "Diversity: Micro, Mezzo and Macro Perspectives."

2. Eighteen hours of specialized coursework (Child and Family Welfare)
3. Six hours of specialized internship (450 hours in an agency placement)
4. Three hours of specialized field seminar

International Students

International students must meet Graduate Studies requirement for admission. A student whose first language is not English must submit an official score report for a Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or must have earned a degree from an accredited college or university within the United States. (See Graduate Catalog, International Students, pg. 24)

Graduation Requirement

Students must complete all degree requirements before they can participate in graduation. Graduation requirements are typically met under the graduate catalog which is no more than five years old at the time of the student's graduation. To complete degree requirements a graduate student must:

1. Complete 60 graduate social work semester hours (thirty for the advanced standing students)
2. Maintain a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher in social work courses.
3. Earn no more than two grades of "C".
4. Student is only allowed to repeat one (1) course.
5. Complete all course work within five years of admission to the program.

Transfer of Credits

A maximum of six credit hours taken at another MSW Program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education will be accepted for transfer at MVSU, depending upon the following criteria:

1. Any course submitted for transfer of credit must have been completed within the last five years.
2. The student must have earned a "B" or better in any course submitted for transfer.
3. Only courses from the foundation curriculum will be accepted for transfer of credit.
4. In the event someone has earned graduate social work credit in another country, the MSW Program will seek approval for these courses through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Office of CSWE.

Incomplete

The grade “I” (incomplete) may be assigned at the student’s request with the instructor’s approval in any course in which the student is unable to complete the work due to extraordinary events beyond the individual’s control. The student must provide proof/documentation of the extraordinary event. The “I” may not be used to extend the term for students who complete the course with an unsatisfactory grade. The “I” grade indicated that you have not completed the course for some unavoidable reason that is acceptable to the instructor. Graduate students have 30 days from the end of the semester in which to complete the work.

Unless the student completes the requirements for removal of the “I” within the allotted number of days from the end of the semester or term in which it was received, the “I” will automatically change to an “F”, regardless of whether or not the student is enrolled. The student will be certified for graduation when all requirements are met, including the removal of all “I” grades. For students who have an “I” in the semester in which they expect to graduate, the certification process and graduation will automatically be deferred to the next year.

Challenge Exams

Students must have a bachelor’s degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and admitted to the Full-time Two-Year Program may seek an exemption from courses in the foundation curriculum that represent duplication of course content previously taken. Exemptions from specific courses must be achieved through proficiency examinations. The student must make a score of at least 80% on a 100% scale to test out of any course. University policy requires that a student must enroll in a course prior to taking the challenge examination.

Advisement**Advisor Responsibilities**

Advising is an essential component of the MSW program. Upon admission to the MSW program, all students will be assigned an advisor. The academic advisor will be a member of the MSW faculty. Major responsibilities of the academic advisor are as follows:

- Assist students in assessing their aptitude and suitability for a career in social work practice.

- Provide students with specific information about courses and program requirements.
- Provide the students with permits to register for courses.
- Advise on course planning in relation to the program's course requirements and the student's educational needs.
- Consult with students as they prepare for field placement.
- Assist students in evaluating their progress and performance in the program.
- Advise students who experience class and field performance difficulties or other issues related to their professional education; and
- Serve as a mentor to student as they enter the profession of social work.

Advisors will provide students with a student advisement form which includes the required schedule of courses that are required for the semester in which the student will be enrolled. The academic map must be followed unless there are special circumstances in which case the program of study will be reviewed and revised as approved by the MSW Program Director and Department Chair.

Student Responsibilities

The advisement process requires students to do the following:

1. Meet with their advisors at least once during the semester to discuss their class schedule, excluding the registration period. It is the student's responsibility to be clear as to program requirements for social work courses and to know what the professional foundation requirements are.
2. Meet with their advisors at least once per semester for professional advisement. Professional advisement focuses primarily on evaluation of the student's aptitude and potential for social work and on assessment of the student's strengths and weaknesses which are likely to affect professional practice.
3. Meet with their advisor anytime they are experiencing problems. Each faculty member maintains posted office hours during the working day for student access. If students need assistance and their advisor is not available, one of the other advisors should be consulted.
4. Students are expected to take courses in proper sequence in order to prevent any delays in graduation. In the event a deviation from the cohort is deemed necessary,

students are required to seek academic advisement and must be willing to accept responsibility for any difficulties in completing the degree on schedule.

5. If a student decides to change his/her program of study, withdraw from school, or drop a course, it is the student's responsibility to notify the advisor.

Retention

All students are required to maintain GPA of at least 3.0 in social work courses. Should the student's cumulative GPA fall below that mark, a period of one semester will be allowed to correct the deficiency. At the discretion of the Department Chair, MSW Director, and VP of Academic Affairs this period may be extended one additional semester. No student will be allowed to enroll in Field Internship or Seminar with less than a 3.0 GPA. All students who fall below a GPA of 3.0 for two semesters, and all students who earn a grade of "D", or "F" will automatically be suspended from the program for one full year. Student must reapply for remittance after separation from the program for one full year.

Non-Retention

Because Social Work is a professional course of study, the Department of Social Work has an obligation to the profession, to recipients of service, and to students to specify its criteria not only for admission to the Department, but also its criteria for non-continuation. Advisement provides the usual mechanism for decisions about retention. Through professional advisement, the student and faculty advisor explore together the student's motivation, aptitude, and suitability for the profession.

It may be necessary, on occasion, to advise students to reconsider their preference for social work. In such a case, the Faculty Advisor will submit the recommendation to the MSW Program Director. The MSW Program Director will convene a meeting with the Faculty Advisor and Chair of the Department of Social Work to make a determination. Basis for a decision of non-retention includes one or more of the criteria listed below:

1. Academic performance below acceptable level. A cumulative grade point average falling below 3.0 is unacceptable. Likewise, satisfactory performance must be obtained in Field Internship. Less than 3.0 two semesters may be cause for dismissal.
2. Failure to complete prerequisite course work which impedes progress.

3. Detrimental or inappropriate behavior in a professional relationship. Such behavior, which may be evidenced in academic or field performance, includes lack of insight or sensitivity to the impact of one's behavior on others or a style of communication which would adversely affect the helping process. (See Field Manual for unsatisfactory Performance in Field Placement)

4. Violation of any standard of the Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Workers. These standards specify requirements for the social worker in professional relationships and encompass responsibilities with respect to conduct, values and attitudes. In particular, students will note the applicability of standards which speak to conduct and deportment in one's capacity or identity as a social worker, and the social worker's ethical responsibilities to clients and colleagues.

Students may also be dismissed from the Program for the following behaviors:

1. Cheating (includes on examinations and papers)
2. Plagiarism
3. Dishonesty
4. And Unsatisfactory Performance in Field Internship

If a decision about retention is reached which is unacceptable to students, they may initiate an appeal following the procedures outlined for student grievance.

Good Standing

To be in good standing with the Social Work Program, students must maintain:

- a. A cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or better in all course work. A grade less than "C" or 2.0 is considered failing in a social work course. Students may not receive a grade of "C" in more than two courses. A third "C" will be cause for dismissal.
- b. Reasonable progress toward completing program requirements.
- c. Maintain ethical behavior as described by NASW Code of Ethics from admission to graduation.

Early Warning Procedures

When it is recognized that students are performing below the expected standards in a course or in

the field, the faculty member shall inform the Faculty Advisor. The Faculty Advisor shall then request a conference with the students to discuss their performance and submit a copy of the conference report to the MSW Program Director within seven (7) days. If performance does not improve by the time agreed upon, one subsequent semester of enrollment in the program after the cumulative grade point average falls below a 3.0, students may be (dismissed from the MSW Program and must reapply for admission) subjected to applicable University and/or department retention policies and procedures.

University and Department of Social Work Grievance Procedures

In the event students feel their rights have been abridged within the Department of Social Work, they can begin the conciliation process as follows:

1. In complaints related to field placement, students should follow the grievance procedures discussed in the Field Internship Manual on pages 38-39.
2. In all other matters (e.g. “Non-Retention”), the student shall consult first with the Faculty Advisor or MSW Program Director. All further appeals should be made to the Department Grievance Committee.
3. If there is a discrepancy in specific academic courses, the student shall talk first with the instructor. The faculty advisor may be consulted.

Students who are not satisfied after conferring with the Instructor and/or Faculty Advisor shall submit a signed, dated, written statement of grievance to the Instructor directly involved in the complaint. The Instructor may meet with the student again but must respond in writing to the student’s complaint within one week after receiving the complaint. The student then has one week in which to appeal the Instructor’s decision in writing to the Chair of the Department of Social Work or the MSW Program Director. The Chair and/or the MSW Program Director has one week to respond to the student. If a student is not satisfied with this decision, further appeals should be made to the Department Grievance Committee.

Professional Development

Students of the Master of Social Work Program will be given opportunities to participate in planning conferences hosted by the Department of Social Work at Mississippi Valley State University. They will also be given the opportunity to attend conferences held at other venues and

by other academic/human service institutions. Graduate students will participate in the various advisory, academic, and professional committees that are a part of the Department of Social Work at Mississippi Valley State University. Through this participation, graduate students will have the opportunity to give input into the development and implementation of policies affecting academic and student affairs.

Americans with Disabilities Act (Special Needs Policy)

Mississippi Valley State University is committed to adhering to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Any student who feels that he/she has a disability which makes it difficult to conduct their studies in the Master of Social Work Program may contact the Disabilities Officer for Mississippi Valley State University. The office is located in the Social Science Building Office 105. Students who believe that they may need accommodations for any course are encouraged to contact the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Coordinator at 662-254-3443.

It is the policy of the Department of Social Work to accommodate students with disabilities pursuant to federal and state law. Students, however, must self-identify with the ADA Coordinator at MVSU. Any student registered at the University with a disability and who needs special accommodations should contact the ADA Coordinator. The ADA Coordinator will forward your letter of accommodations to pertinent faculty member.

NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY

Mississippi Valley State University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation or veteran status in provision of educational programs and services or employment opportunities. The policy extends both to employment and admission to the University

Mississippi Valley State University does not discriminate on basis of race, sex, or disability in its education programs and activities, pursuant to requirement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990.

Non-discrimination Policy and Sexual Harassment Policies

Students are admitted to the Master of Social Work Program without regard to race, creed, color, class, national origin, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Students who feel that they are victims of discrimination may file a grievance with the Chair of the Department of Social Work. If students are dissatisfied with the results at that level, they may appeal to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs. No actions will be taken against students for filing grievances in the prescribed manner. All policies relating to employees' rights to freedom from sexual harassment are also extended to students. Sexual harassment policies also apply to field internship experiences.

Student Organizations

The *MSW Student Social Work Organization* provides students with opportunities to get involved with important social issues, foster communication and engagement between students, faculty, and administrators in the Department of Social Work. The MSW Student Organization coordinates fundraising events, organizes volunteer activities, host special events with guest speakers, and sponsors social activities that are of interest to students. This organization also allows students to advocate for their own interests and to give input into policy formulation and implementation in the Department of Social Work. Anyone admitted for graduate social work studies at Mississippi Valley State University is eligible for membership. The organization consists of four officers: 1) President; 2) Vice-President; 3) Treasurer; and 4) Secretary. The organization's members set dues at the beginning of each year and set the club's agenda. A member of the graduate faculty will act as the organization's advisor.

The *MVSU Black Social Workers Student Organization* provides students with the opportunity to involve themselves in the many social issues of the Black Community and network with other student and professional Black Social Workers across the country. Membership in this student organization provides membership into the National Association of Black Social Workers. MVSU Black Social Workers Student Organization works with and supports all activities of the MSW Student Social Work Organization. Anyone admitted to social work studies at Mississippi Valley State University is eligible for membership. The organization consists of four officers: 1) President; 2) Vice-President; 3) Treasurer; and 4) Secretary. The organization's members set dues every two years in the 1st meeting of the Fall semester. A member of the graduate and/or undergraduate faculty will act as the organization's

advisor.

Mississippi Social Work Licensure

Students are required to take the social work licensure examination during the last 15 hours of course requirements; no later than by April 15 of each year. Students can obtain licensure application and other necessary forms in addition to valuable licensure information by going to Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage & Family Therapists webpage <http://dsitspe01.its.ms.gov/swmft/web.nsf/> contact via telephone at (601) 987-6806.

Communication

An e-mail account is available free of charge to MVSU students. This MVSU account will be the official contact used for all Department of Social Work correspondence. Much correspondence is conveyed to students via email so the account should be checked frequently. Students are asked to ensure that the Department of Social Work has a current MVSU e-mail address, mailing address, and telephone number. The success of our degree program depends partly on our ability to foster ties to our students, alumni and the larger community. Students can update their contact information by informing the Master of Social Work Program administrative assistant, in writing, of any changes.

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