

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 and 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 (*next page*), 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, taking seriously faculty assessments of my academic and professional aptitude and performance. This includes discussion with faculty about their observations underlying their evaluations and the steps I might take when improvement is warranted.
- I understand and agree that the faculty and staff may share with other faculty, staff and administrators, field instructors and other staff at field agencies, 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 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 deemed unsatisfactory 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.

Social Work Performance Standards for Admission, Matriculation and Graduation

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 multisystem 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.

To remain in good standing in the Social Work Department, 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 performance standards for admission, matriculation and graduation that must be clearly and consistently observed and followed for students to be successful in the program.

PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Skills and Essential Behaviors

- Demonstrates an understanding of, adheres to and promotes the NASW Code of Ethics
- Demonstrates an understanding and appreciation of the value of diversity; works effectively and responsibly with people of differing races, ethnicities, abilities, ages, classes, genders, sexual orientations, religious beliefs and/or nationalities
- Shows respect and effectively advocates for the rights of others
- Demonstrates a commitment to ending social and economic injustice
- Maintains and demonstrates comprehension of professional boundaries
- Is committed to clients' freedom of choice and self-determination
- Is consistently honest and demonstrates integrity by being truthful about one's own background, experiences and qualifications
- Refrains from sexually harassing others; making verbal or physical threats; or abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal or sexual ways
- Refrains from being involved in sexual relationships with clients or participating in dual relationships with clients where conflicts of interest may develop or exist
- Utilizes clinical supervision effectively and demonstrates a willingness to ask for help

Descriptors/Examples

- Maintains confidentiality
- Demonstrates openness to working with diverse groups and individuals of different backgrounds including fellow students, colleagues and clients
- Asks supervisor and instructors for help when needed
- Follows through with commitments
- Maintains clear boundaries; for example, does not socialize with clients

SELF-AWARENESS

Skills and Essential Behaviors

- Demonstrates ability to acknowledge how one's own attitudes, beliefs, biases and personal and past experiences affect professional judgment, decision-making, thinking, behavior and relationships
- Shows willingness and ability to assess and reflect on strengths and identify areas for improvement
- Is open to feedback and constructive criticism
- Demonstrates a level of self-awareness and an ability to express how one is perceived by others
- Demonstrates the ability to self-critique and to assume full responsibility to protect peers, colleagues, research participants, clients and others from the adverse consequences of personal performance problems and behaviors

Descriptors/Examples

- Demonstrates self-reflection in class, internship, process recordings, group work and written course exercises
- Makes necessary adjustments to professional and/or academic workloads in the face of personal difficulties that may adversely impact the quality of academic work or practice with clients
- Takes initiative in gaining knowledge as needed
- Makes changes based on feedback and constructive guidance

COMMUNICATION

Skills and Essential Behaviors

- Communicates responsibly, respectfully and effectively with colleagues, faculty, staff, administrators, field instructors and clients
- Utilizes effective listening and empathic skills to establish rapport
- Demonstrates ability and willingness to listen to others and is open to feedback
- Advocates effectively in a constructive manner according to NASW guidelines
- Utilizes institutional channels first to effectively resolve conflicts
- Demonstrates respect for the professional expertise of fellow agency workers, students in class, and program faculty and staff

Descriptors/Examples

- Receives, comprehends and responds appropriately and timely to verbal, non-verbal and written forms of communication, including emails sent from the Social Work Department and field agency personnel
- Expresses feelings and ideas in a way that can be understood by others
- Participates cooperatively as a productive member of the classroom, agency task groups and teams
- Maintains commitments to clients, students and colleagues
- Voices opinions and feedback in a productive and non-judgmental manner
- Demonstrates effective, respectful ways to advocate for self and others
- Prepares written documents that are clear, concise, accurate and complete and that reflect correct grammar and APA citation and referencing guidelines
- Follows agency guidelines for record keeping

READINESS

Skills and Essential Behaviors

- Is open and committed to learning from colleagues, classroom instructors and field instructors
- Seeks out and utilizes help when needed and responsibly addresses one's own health and emotional challenges that may interfere with scholastic and professional performance
- Is able to distinguish between facts and inference
- Is able to draw conclusions based in relevant information and evidence
- Demonstrates ability to think critically
- Demonstrates an ability to write clearly with appropriate grammar and sentence construction

Descriptors/Examples

- Takes initiative with basic tasks in agencies such as making phone calls, taking messages, calling agencies to gain information about their services and locating resources in the community
- Demonstrates ability to include relevant and applicable literature in presentations, research and written work
- Assessments of clients reflect comprehensive, inclusive and relevant data
- Demonstrates use and knowledge when working with clients through the use of process recordings
- Demonstrates willingness to take initiative
- Can identify problem-solving steps to resolve challenges
- Able to communicate ideas clearly in writing

PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

Skills and Essential Behaviors

- Shows willingness and ability to effectively prioritize, manage and complete tasks on time and observe and meet deadlines
- Seeks professional help and consultation when needed
- Utilizes thoughtful and informed judgment in making professional decisions
- Demonstrates appearance and demeanor that are appropriate to the roles and settings encountered during the educational process, including field practice experiences
- Is able to form and sustain professional relationships

Descriptors/Examples

- Arrives on time to all classes, meetings and field agency required hours
- Consistently follows through with commitments including group work assignments, fieldwork and assignments
- Demonstrates an ability to be flexible in responding to changing needs and priorities of the field agency and clients
- 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
- Voices concerns to field instructor and/or liaison in a respectful manner and in accordance with agency and field protocols and policies
- Keeps field instructor, liaison, instructors and staff apprised of issues that may arise and works proactively with all parties to alleviate issues

I have read and understand this Social Work Contract and the Social Work Performance Standards for Admission, Matriculation and Graduation, and agree to adhere to the standards therein.

STUDENT'S NAME

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE

DATE