

JMSW Program

Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior *

Introduction & Purpose

The JMSW Program is committed to supporting students as they prepare to become professional social workers. This document describes the Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior each Master of Social Work (MSW) student must satisfy to enroll in, progress through, and graduate from the MSW program.

Because the JMSW Program is preparing students for careers as professional social workers, and given the nature of professional social work practice to protect the clients and communities we serve, the JMSW Program has established requirements for student conduct that not only focus on academic performance but that also emphasize necessary skills, attributes, and competencies. These requirements apply within the traditional classroom setting, in field placements, and in the broader community context.

Becoming a professional is a gradual process. Thus, the Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior articulate minimum expectations for students. If faculty or administrators have questions about whether a student is able to meet these Standards, the Unprofessional Behavior and/or Impairment policy will be followed and this document can be used as a guide to introduce faculty's concerns to be discussed as student advancement issue at the next JMSW faculty meeting. The full Unprofessional Behavior and/or Impairment policy is outlined in the *JMSW Student Handbook*.

Students can participate in the MSW program so long as they are able to meet these standards with or without reasonable accommodations. Students who seek accommodations for disabilities should contact the NCAT Office of Veteran and Disability Support Services (OVDSS) or the UNCG Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) as soon as possible. That office will determine a student's eligibility for and recommend appropriate accommodations and services. NCAT OVDSS may be reached by phone at 336-334-7765 or by email at jtjones3@ncat.edu. UNCG OARS may be reached by phone at 336-334-5440 or by email at oars@uncg.edu.

Commitment to Non-Discrimination

Both NCAT and UNCG are committed to equality of educational opportunity. The universities do not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender, gender expression, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, *sex*, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

* Based on UNC-CH School of Social Work *Technical Standards for Professional and Ethical Behavior*

The Technical Standards outlined below address the following:

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| 1. <i>Communication</i> | 5. <i>Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Social Justice</i> |
| 2. <i>Physical and Cognitive Ability</i> | 6. <i>Ethical Conduct</i> |
| 3. <i>Emotional Stability, Management, and Regulation</i> | 7. <i>Interpersonal Skills</i> |
| 4. <i>Self-Awareness and Reflective Listening</i> | 8. <i>Academic and Professional Standards</i> |

Technical Standards

1. Communication

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Express ideas and feelings clearly;
- Demonstrate the ability to process and react effectively to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Communicate responsibly and respectfully in all interactions with colleagues, faculty, field instructors, task supervisors, staff, clients, other professionals, and all others they might come into contact within their student role;
- Communicate clearly through written products at a level appropriate for graduate work, including using correct grammar and spelling and applying the JMSW Program designated writing style (APA);
- Advocate for themselves in an appropriate and responsible manner that uses proper
- channels for conflict resolution as outlined in the JMSW Student Handbook on page 29. And
- Mastery of both written and spoken English is required at matriculation into the program, although applications from students with hearing and/or speech disabilities will receive full consideration. In such cases, the use of a trained intermediary or other communications aide may be appropriate if it functions only as an information conduit and does not serve integrative or interpretive functions.

2. Physical and Cognitive Ability

Students must have sufficient skills to meet the following requirements:

- Attend and participate in classes and field placements per the expectations outlined in the syllabi and in accordance with the field setting and the Council on Social Work Education Social Work Competencies;
- Navigate transportation to attend field and classroom requirements;
- Use the technology required to engage in scholarship and effective practice including, but not limited to, the use of computers, telephones, and agency databases;
- Demonstrate the ability to acquire knowledge and process experiences to inform practice; and
- Demonstrate the capacity to think critically and to apply effective problem-solving skills.

3. *Emotional and Mental Stability, Management, and Regulation*

In accordance with the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Code of Ethics (§ 4.05), social work students should not allow their personal problems or issues to interfere with their judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have professional responsibility. The social work student must demonstrate the emotional and mental stability necessary to execute sound judgment and performance in the program as well as generally to support the practice of social work. Students must be willing and able to meet the following standards:

- Demonstrate appropriate self-disclosure (the revealing of personal information) and professional boundaries in classroom and field-settings, including all assignments;
- Maintain respectful relationships with colleagues, faculty, field instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals;
- Seek appropriate help when personal issues interfere with professional and scholastic performance;
- Manage stress effectively through self-care and by relying upon supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others; and
- The ability to integrate into practice constructive criticism received in both didactic and field-settings

4. *Self-Awareness and Reflective Thinking*

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate a willingness to continually reflect on their own values, attitudes, beliefs, biases, emotions, past and current experiences, and to consider how these factors affect their thinking, behavior, interactions, and relationships;
- Demonstrate the capacity to continuously re-assess their own strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice;
- Take responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others; and
- Seek supervision and accept constructive feedback in a positive manner.

5. *Respect for Diversity and Social Justice*

Social work practice requires understanding, affirming, and respecting another individual's way of life and values. As described in the Council on Social Work Education 2015 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards, "Social workers appreciate that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experience may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power" (p. 7). Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate a willingness to examine their personal beliefs, values, and assumptions that perpetuate or counter oppression;
- Strive to relate and to work nonjudgmentally with others who differ from themselves, regardless of the person's age, class, color, culture, race or ethnicity, family structure, beliefs, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, ability, and/or value system;
- Demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to diversity, oppression, and privilege;

- Approach differences with an attitude of humility and respect, acknowledging the importance of cultural differences in shaping life experiences;
- Demonstrate the ability to develop and strengthen cross-cultural proficiency sufficient to work effectively with a wide variety of diverse groups and communities; and
- Exhibit an appreciation for difference and a commitment to engage around the complex issues of diversity and social justice.

6. *Ethical Conduct*

Students are required to adhere to ethical conduct and decision-making in accordance with the values, ethics, and standards established for the social work profession, as formalized in the NASW Code of Ethics, and to abide by all applicable University policies, including the NCAT Academic Dishonestly Policy and the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Adhere to a commitment to clients' rights to freedom of choice and self-determination;
- Demonstrate behavior and decisions reflecting the highest standards of honesty and personal and professional integrity;
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries with colleagues, faculty, field instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals;
- Understand their role in practice as a learner and social work student; this includes the ability to correctly judge the limits of one's own competence and to seek help from an appropriate source when necessary;
- Disclose any criminal conviction, plea of guilty, plea of no contact, plea of nolo contendere, Alfred plea, deferred prosecution, prayer for judgment, or any other acceptance of responsibility for the commission of a crime, other than a traffic-related misdemeanor or infraction at point of admissions or as the situation arises;
- Disclose any discipline imposed by a state licensing board or the equivalent; and
- Follow federal and state laws and agency policies regarding confidentiality and mandatory reporting, including seeking permission from agency administrators for the use of agency materials, records, or audio-visual materials for academic course work.

7. *Interpersonal Skills*

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate the ability to build rapport with and work effectively with colleagues, faculty, field instructors/task supervisors, staff, clients, and other professionals;
- Demonstrate the capacity to understand the experience and perspectives of individuals or groups and use this empathy as a basis for a productive relationship; and
- Exhibit conflict resolution skills, including the ability to negotiate differing attitudes and opinions.

8. *Academic and Professional Standards*

Students must be willing and able to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate the ability to meet the Graduate Schools' requirements to remain in good academic standing and to continue in the program (i.e., cannot receive a grade of F or nine credit hours

with a grade of C to remain in good academic standing). This includes following the policies and procedures of the JMSW program, the home University and both Graduate Schools.

- Show the capacity to successfully complete required field practicum hours and demonstrate positive progress in the required competencies and behavioral indicators in the field and classroom settings;
- Follow the policies, procedures, and operating standards of JMSW Program, the Graduate Schools, NCAT, UNCG, and the field placement agency;
- Ensure that appearance, dress, and general demeanor are appropriate to the context;
- Be punctual and dependable, prioritize responsibilities and manage time well, attend class and field in accordance with relevant policy, observe deadlines, complete assignments on time, and conscientiously arrange and keep appointments; and
- Adhere to agency policies and practices through the learning process and supervision.

Adopted by JMSW Faculty: May 2018