



# **Master of Social Work Program STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026**

## Welcome!

Attending graduate school is a great choice to further your education and career. We are excited that you chose the collaborative Millersville University | Shippensburg Master of Social Work (MSW) Program. As a program, we pride ourselves on adhering to the social work values and core competencies. We are committed to providing a safe place for you to learn and grow.

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## **SECTION I: MU-SU MSW PROGRAM**

### **Organizational Context**

Millersville University and Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania are institutions of higher education offering programs of study leading to the Baccalaureate and Master's degrees in social work; they are members of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.

The Millersville University-Shippensburg University MSW Program (MU-SU MSW) is the first collaborative social work program that is part of the [Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education](#). Both public universities were founded in the second half of the 19th century. Millersville and Shippensburg universities jointly offer a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). It is designed for applicants who have earned their Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Bachelor of Arts in Social Work (BASW) degree as well as for career changers without an undergraduate social work degree. The program was developed to support both the full-time student and the working professional. State-of-the-art technology permits students to acquire social work knowledge, skills, and values through multiple educational methods, including in-person classes or an online program. Because this is a joint program, some courses are offered by Millersville University while other courses are offered by Shippensburg University allowing students benefit from the quality faculty and resources of both universities. The full program is available on each campus.

### **Organizational Context in the Context of the Social Work Profession**

The MU-SU MSW program aims to provide an inclusive and diverse environment that responds to the needs and demands of vulnerable and oppressed populations and the impacts of historical oppression. Students should be familiar with the purpose of the social work profession, as stated by several national social work organizations.

From the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE):

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, the creation of conditions that facilitate the realization of human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of life for all persons, locally and globally. To fully realize our commitment to social justice, social workers must engage in anti-racist, culturally responsive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels, informed by the theories and voices of those who have been marginalized. In an ever-shifting social and environmental context, social work is agile, responsive, and generative (CSWE, 2021).

From the National Association of Social Workers (NASW):

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being

and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. A historic and defining feature of social work is the profession's focus on individual well-being in a social context and the well-being of society. Fundamental to social work is attention to the environmental forces that create, contribute to, and address problems in living.

Social workers promote social justice and social change with and on behalf of clients. "Clients" is used inclusively to refer to individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are sensitive to cultural and ethnic diversity and strive to end discrimination, oppression, poverty, and other forms of social injustice. These activities may be in the form of direct practice, community organizing, supervision, consultation, administration, advocacy, social and political action, policy development and implementation, education, and research and evaluation. Social workers seek to enhance the capacity of people to address their own needs. Social workers also seek to promote the responsiveness of organizations, communities, and other social institutions to individuals' needs and social problems.

The mission of the social work profession is rooted in a set of core values. These core values, embraced by social workers throughout the profession's history, are the foundation of social work's unique purpose and perspective:

- service
- social justice
- dignity and worth of the person
- importance of human relationships
- integrity
- competence.

Students may review the NASW COE [here](#).

From the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW):

The National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., comprised of people of African ancestry, is committed to enhancing the quality of life and empowering people of African ancestry through advocacy, human services delivery, and research.

National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc. will work to create a world in which people of African ancestry will live free from racial domination, economic exploitation, and cultural oppression. In collaboration with national, international, and other appropriate groups, NABSW will continue to leverage its collective expertise to strategically develop the capacity of people of African ancestry to sustain and flourish. NABSW's vision is guided by the Principles of the Nguzo Saba, which are Unity, Self-determination, Collective Work and Responsibility, Cooperative Economics, Purpose, Creativity, and Faith, and the Seven Cardinal Virtues of Ma'at, which are Right, Truth, Justice, Order, Reciprocity, Balance, and Harmony.

The NABSW COE may be found [here](#).

From the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW):

Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that facilitates social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.

The IFSW Global Statement of Ethical Principles can be found [here](#).

### **Advanced Generalist Practice**

Every MSW program has an area of specialization. This program's specialization is Advanced Generalist Practice, which, according to data from the Council on Social Work Education, is one of the fastest-growing areas of specialization for MSW programs in the United States (Dran, 2014; Lavitt, 2009). The Advanced Generalist specialization allows students to practice broadly and deeply, encompassing what Bolin (2014) identified as a "both/and" perspective of the helping process as multidimensional and complex.

The advanced generalist approach to social work practice is characterized by the practitioner's ability to simultaneously address complex situations within and across multiple levels and systems. This strengths-based orientation is grounded in a liberal arts foundation and guided by a systems approach incorporating core social work knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective aspects, and ethics and respect for diversity. Using research-informed practice, the advanced generalist social worker promotes positive change in the social, political, and economic arenas to advance human rights.

Advanced generalists, as described by Derezotes (1999) have greater knowledge and higher skill levels that enable them to address more complex human and organizational problems and to supervise and administer programs, including guiding the work of others. Our curriculum prepares students to be innovative, thoughtful, independent, and ethical social work practitioners. Upon graduation, students are able to engage in multidimensional problem setting, leadership and self-reflection, ethical advocacy, and lifelong development of the profession by finding ways to share their knowledge of effective interventions (Lavitt, 2009, Dran 2014)

The Advanced Generalist Practice specialization builds on the skills learned in the generalist year (this is either the first year of the Regular Standing Program, or, for those, with an undergraduate degree in social work, the content completed in your undergraduate program). Social workers in Pennsylvania, and beyond, need to be prepared to work in diverse geographic areas (from rural areas to cities) where they are called upon to address multiple problems across multiple systems of intervention (individual, family, group, community, and organizational). The generalist perspective, as described by Sheafor and Horejsi (2003), enables social work practitioners to draw upon many theories and models to develop the most suitable interventions

with client systems at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of practice.

### **Program Mission**

The mission of the Millersville University and Shippensburg University Collaborative MSW Program is to promote **human and community** well-being by providing an **advanced generalist** social work education that prepares students to be **contemporary** practitioners and advocates for individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations utilizing the person in environment perspective. We prepare students to be competent, **globally** responsive **evidence-informed** practitioners, committed to **social, racial, economic, and environmental justice** and **human rights**, which are rooted in the **values** of the social work profession.

### **Program Goals**

The MU-SU program seeks to:

1. Prepare graduates for competent advanced generalist practice through the acquisition and demonstration of social work competencies and values consistent with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) educational policy and accreditation standards and the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.
2. Provide graduates with the advanced generalist knowledge values and skills for social work practice across micro, mezzo, and macro systems to assess, plan, and facilitate change with attention to the profession's commitment to interprofessional collaboration.
3. Develop graduates' commitment to continued evidence-informed professional development and prepare graduates to practice human rights-based social work that promotes social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### **Social Work Education**

The MU-SU MSW Program faculty implements the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) in developing a quality social work graduate program. The CSWE EPAS Statement of Purpose defines the purpose of social work and the role of social work education:

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person-in-environment framework, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, the purpose of social work is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons, locally and globally.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education at the baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral levels shapes the profession's future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, the promotion of evidence-informed practice through scientific inquiry, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community. Social work education is advanced by the scholarship of teaching and learning, and scientific inquiry into its multifaceted dimensions,



processes, and outcomes (CSWE, 2015, p. 5).

### **The Council on Social Work Education and Accreditation**

The MU-SU MSW program is designed and accredited based on the educational standards developed by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). CSWE is the accrediting body for both undergraduate and graduate social work programs in the United States. As stated by CSWE, “EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models and methods of curriculum design by balancing requirements that promote comparable outcomes across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate” (CSWE, 2015, p.5). The MSW program has been continuously accredited since 2006.

While each program has a unique way of meeting the essential educational requirements articulated by CSWE’s Education Policy, its accreditation standards must be met in a program’s design, implementation, and evaluation. The CSWE Educational Policy and accreditation standards may be found at [the Council on Social Work Education Website](https://www.csweducationalpolicy.org/).

### **Core Competencies**

The accreditation process focuses on an assessment of student outcomes from content and structure (CSWE, 2015). CSWE has identified 9 Core Competencies that a student must achieve during their course of study (all 9 must be achieved by the conclusion of a program, but all 9 competencies do not need to be addressed in every course). Each MSW course syllabus will list the competencies that are met in the course and through which assignments the competencies are achieved.

Each core competency is identified below followed by the Generalist year behaviors (designated as Generalist Behaviors) and the Specialist year behaviors (designated as Specialized Behaviors).

### **Generalist Year Competencies**

The Generalist year competencies and behaviors have been reviewed and assigned to Generalist year courses and assignments by the faculty of the program based on the requirements for Generalist Practice in keeping with Educational Policy M2.1 and Program Goal 1 of CSWE’s 2015 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards for Master’s in Social Work Programs. The MSW program updated its competencies in May 2024 based on the 2022 EPAS.

### **Generalist Competencies and Behaviors**

#### **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.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

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.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

Social workers:

- apply and communicate an 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 engaging clients and constituencies as experts in 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.

#### *Generalist Behaviors*

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.

#### *Generalist Behaviors*

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.

#### *Generalist Behaviors*

Social workers:

- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal levels that impact 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 understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

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.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

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 inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

Social workers:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance the 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.

### *Generalist Behaviors*

Social workers:

- select and use appropriate methods for the 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 level.

### Specialization Year Competencies

#### Mission:

The mission of the Millersville University and Shippensburg University Collaborative MSW Program is to promote **human and community** well-being by providing an **advanced generalist** social work education that prepares students to be **contemporary** practitioners and advocates for individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations utilizing the person in environment perspective. We prepare students to be competent, **globally** responsive **evidence-informed** practitioners, committed to **social, racial, economic, and environmental justice and human rights**, which are rooted in the **values** of the social work profession.

#### Goals

The MU-SU program seeks to:

1. Prepare graduates for competent advanced generalist practice through the acquisition and demonstration of social work competencies and values consistent with Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) educational policy and accreditation standards and Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education.
2. Provide graduates with the advanced generalist knowledge values and skills for social work practice across micro, mezzo and macro systems to assess, plan and facilitate change with attention to the profession's commitment to interprofessional collaboration.
3. Develop graduates' commitment to continued evidence-informed professional development and prepare graduates to practice human rights-based social work that promotes social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.

### Specialization Competencies

#### Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant policies, laws, and regulations that may affect practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand that ethics are informed by principles of human rights and apply them toward realizing social, racial, economic, and environmental justice in their practice. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision making and apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize and manage personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. Social workers understand how their evolving worldview, personal experiences, and affective reactions influence their professional judgement and behavior. Social workers take measures to care for themselves professionally and personally, understanding that self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work

practice. Social workers use rights-based, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to understand and critique the professions history, mission, roles, and responsibilities, and recognize historical and current contexts of oppression in shaping institutions and social work. Social workers understand the roles of other professionals when engaged in interprofessional practice. Social workers recognize the importance of lifelong learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure relevant and effective practice. Social workers understand digital technology and the ethical use of technology.

Behaviors:

- Model professional demeanor in behavior and all modes of communication;
- Use self-reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism while also continuously seeking to critique the social work profession from a critical race perspective;
- Use technology ethically and appropriately;
- Use supervision and consultation to guide practice decisions;
- Demonstrate the ability to resolve ethical dilemmas by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models of ethical decision-making with special focus on demonstrating anti-racism and anti-oppressive practices

## **Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice**

Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights. Social workers are knowledgeable about the global intersecting and ongoing injustices throughout history that result in oppression and racism, including social work's role and response. Social workers critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege in society in order to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice by reducing inequities and ensuring dignity and respect for all. Social workers advocate for and engage in strategies to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social resources, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably, and that civil, political, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.

Behaviors:

- Demonstrate knowledge of historical and current global and societal injustices on individuals, families, groups, communities, and society;
- Critically evaluate the distribution of power and privilege and their impacts on individuals, families, groups, communities, and society;
- Advocate for practices that advance human rights and promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

## **Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice**

Social workers understand how racism and oppression shape human experiences and how these two constructs influence practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community levels and in policy and research. Social workers understand the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and use their knowledge, awareness, and skills to engage in anti-racist practice. Social workers understand how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity development and affect equity and inclusion. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of factors including but not limited to age,

caste, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, generational status, immigration status, legal status, marital status, political ideology, race, nationality, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that this intersectionality means that a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege and power. Social workers understand the societal and historical roots of social and racial injustices and the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination. Social workers understand cultural humility and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, racial, technological, and cultural exclusions, may create privilege and power resulting in systemic oppression.

Behaviors:

- Demonstrate an understanding of how systems of oppression and white supremacy impact all levels of social work practice;
- Apply cultural humility and critical reflection in how diversity and intersectionality shape human experiences and identity;
- Engage in anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion practices with individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations

#### **Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice**

Social workers use ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive approaches in conducting research and building knowledge. Social workers use research to inform their practice decision making and articulate how their practice experience informs research and evaluation decisions. Social workers critically evaluate and critique current, empirically sound research to inform decisions pertaining to practice, policy, and programs. Social workers understand the inherent bias in research and evaluate design, analysis, and interpretation using an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective. Social workers know how to access, critique, and synthesize the current literature to develop appropriate research questions and hypotheses. Social workers demonstrate knowledge and skills regarding qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis, and they interpret data derived from these methods. Social workers demonstrate knowledge about methods to assess reliability and validity in social work research. Social workers can articulate and share research findings in ways that are usable to a variety of clients and constituencies. Social workers understand the value of evidence derived from interprofessional and diverse research methods, approaches, and sources.

Behaviors:

- Identify and access relevant scholarly research that are culturally informed, anti-racist and anti-oppressive to a variety of clients and constituencies;
- Demonstrate knowledge and skills involved in quantitative and qualitative research methods that pertain to practice, policy, and programs;
- Apply relevant research methods to advance the purpose of social work

#### **Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice**

Social workers identify social policy at the local, state, federal, and global level that affects wellbeing, human rights and justice, service delivery, and access to social services. Social workers recognize the historical, social, racial, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. Social workers understand and



critique the history and current structures of social policies and services and the role of policy in service delivery through rights-based, anti-oppressive, and anti-racist lenses. Social workers influence policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation within their practice settings with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers actively engage in and advocate for anti-racist and anti-oppressive policy practice to effect change in those settings.

Behaviors:

- Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the ways in which human rights, social, racial, economic, and environmental justice, and services are mediated by policy;
- Evaluate, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance outcomes relevant to practice at all levels;
- Demonstrate collaboration with clients, colleagues, and other constituencies for policy action

### **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 individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, and privilege as well as their personal values and personal experiences may affect their ability to engage effectively with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers use the principles of interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate.

Behaviors:

- Use differential engagement skills for empathy, reflection, and use of self to engage effectively in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies in complex practice situations;
- Model effective engagement practices that mitigate personal biases and professional values to build productive rapport with client systems

### **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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in culturally responsive assessment with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Assessment involves a collaborative process of defining presenting challenges and identifying with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities to develop a mutually agreed-upon plan. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and use interprofessional collaboration in this process. Social workers are self-reflective and understand how bias, power, privilege, and their personal values and experiences may affect their assessment and decision making.

Behaviors:

- Collect and critically synthesize multiple points of assessment information using a variety of tools rooted in human rights and anti-oppressive practices to create a comprehensive assessment;
- Identify, evaluate, select, and potentially modify assessment tools, methods, and approaches in advanced practice with client and constituents from a lens of cultural humility

### **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. Social workers understand theories of human behavior, person-in-environment, and other interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and they critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in selecting culturally responsive interventions with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions and participate in interprofessional collaboration to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers facilitate effective transitions and endings.

Behaviors:

- Apply advanced intervention strategies in response to client systems' unique circumstances and needs rooted in culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions;
- Design and intervention strategy based upon assessment data at multiple system levels

### **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 evaluate processes and outcomes to increase practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspectives in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers use qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness.

Behaviors:

- Identify appropriate culturally responsive evaluation methods to assess interventions and outcomes;
- Use appropriate tools and technology in an ethical manner in the evaluation of the process and outcomes of interventions;
- Use self-reflection, supervision, and research methods to regularly evaluate and, if necessary, modify practice

## **SECTION II: CURRICULUM**

The generalist year curriculum (first year in the Regular Standing program or undergraduate content for those with an undergraduate social work degree) prepares students for generalist practice positions (such as casework) to engage with clients (e.g., individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, assess their needs, link them to services, and monitor their progress. The curriculum prepares students to meet the core competencies of the generalist year program goals. The MU-SU MSW advanced generalist curriculum includes content on social work values and ethics, diversity, populations-at-risk and social, economic, and environmental justice, human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policy and services, social work practice, research, and field education. The knowledge and skills gained in the generalist year are built upon in the specialization year. The specialization year curriculum includes content on developing skills required to perform clinical assessments, manage large caseloads, take on supervisory roles, engage in policy-level advocacy, conduct and disseminate research, and explore new ways of drawing on social services to meet the needs of clients and communities.

### **History of the MU-SU MSW Program Accreditation**

The Millersville University of Pennsylvania and Shippensburg University Collaborative MSW Program was established in 2006 and in candidacy until accredited as a collaborative program in 2009, with reaffirmation in 2014, to respond to the lack of MSW programs in our respective geographic regions of Pennsylvania. The program has maintained full accreditation since 2010 with re-affirmation granted every 8 years.

### **Generalist Year Curriculum**

The MU-SU MSW Generalist year courses provide content and skill-building in human behavior in the social environment, social welfare policies and services, research, social work practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels, and practicum experience. The content address each of the nine core competencies. The Generalist year curriculum must be successfully completed before students can proceed to the Specialization year. Please see the Course Progression maps in the appendices.

Required Courses (All courses are 3 credits unless otherwise specified)

- SOWK 501: Principles and Philosophies of Social Work
- SOWK 505: Social Work Practice with Diverse Populations
- SOWK 510: Human Behavior in the Social Environment I
- SOWK 511: Human Behavior in the Social Environment II
- SOWK 515: Social Welfare Policy
- SOWK 520: Micro/Mezzo Social Work Practice
- SOWK 521: Macro Social Work Practice
- SOWK 525: Research Methods
- SOWK 530: Field Practicum I
- SOWK 531: Field Practicum II

## **Specialization Year Curriculum**

The Specialization year curriculum provides content and skills building that develop students' ability to practice from an Advanced Generalist perspective utilizing skills, values, and knowledge from the Advanced Generalist framework. Students complete two semesters of practicum education, additional social welfare policy and social work research courses, two courses in advanced practice (micro/mezzo, and macro), and electives (3 electives for Regular Standing status and 4 electives for Advanced Standing status) in their field of interest. In the Specialization year curriculum, students build upon the Generalist year curriculum; therefore, no course in the specialization curriculum may be taken until all generalist courses are completed. The specialization curriculum extends the core competencies with advanced behaviors.

Required Courses (All courses are 3 credits unless otherwise specified)

- SOWK 601: Integrative Seminar (this course is taken by Advanced Standing Students only)
- SOWK 610: Advanced Micro Practice and Assessment
- SOWK 615: Advanced Social Welfare Policy
- SOWK 620: Advanced Practice with Groups and Families
- SOWK 621: Advanced Macro Social Work Practice
- SOWK 625: Advanced Research Methods
- SOWK 630: Advanced Field Practicum I
- SOWK 631: Advanced Field Practicum II

### **Specialization Social Work Electives**

In addition to the Generalist and Specialization core course requirements, the MU-SU MSW curriculum requires Regular Standing students (60-credit program) to take a minimum of three electives and Advanced Standing students (36-credit program) to take a minimum of four electives. These courses provide an opportunity for students to develop more in-depth knowledge and skills to provide service to various populations. Elective courses (3 credits each) usually are taken upon completion of the Generalist year curriculum and provide an opportunity for students to apply their advanced knowledge and skills to a specific area of interest. These electives also may be applied to certificates, certifications, and dual degree programs, when applicable.

Current Electives include:

- SOWK 602: Behavioral Health
- SOWK 604: Health Care
- SOWK 605: Child Welfare
- SOWK 606: School Social Work
- SOWK 607: Emergency Mental Health and Trauma
- SOWK 608: Social Work Administration and Supervision
- SOWK 609: Introduction to Art Therapy
- SOWK 613: Mediation in Social Work Practice
- SOWK 611: Children and Youth at Risk

- SOWK 614: Survey Development and Measurement
- SOWK 616: Leadership Dynamics in Social Work Practice
- SOWK 617: Addictions in the Field of Social Work
- SOWK 619: Global Perspectives in Social Work
- SOWK 622: Military Social Work Practice
- SOWK 623: Narrative Therapy (specialization year students or permission of instructor)
- SOWK 624: Homelessness in the U.S.
- SOWK 626: Traumatic Bereavement: Assessment & Intervention
- SOWK 627: Social Work, Sport, and Mental Health
- SOWK 628: Introduction to Trauma-Informed Treatment
- SOWK 640-643: Special Topics
  - Topical courses on a variety of issues: offered sporadically
- SOWK 691: Independent Study
  - Students may request to engage in independent topical study or research when available

## CLASS REGISTRATION

### Millersville

1. Determine the class(es) for which you are registering
2. Go to the [Web Schedule & Registration](#) page on the MU website.
3. Select the *Term* you are registering for from the drop-down menu
4. Select *SOWK* for the department
5. Mark the circle for *Graduate Courses* and *All Courses* and click *Submit*
6. Locate the classes you are taking. Make note of the *CRN* number. \*NOTE: Be sure to read the information in 'red' for important prerequisite, class and meeting day/time information.
7. With the CRN number handy, go to your student [Max](#) account.
8. Choose *Student Services* then *Registration* then *Add/Drop Classes*
9. Enter the CRN for each class to build your schedule

### Shippensburg

Registration for ALL classes will take place through the [myShip](#) Experience portal.

After you select a course for which you want to register, select **SUBMIT CHANGES** to register for the course. If you do not select **SUBMIT CHANGES**, your registration for the course will not be submitted. Submission of your registration for a course will return results. Be sure to review these results.

If you receive a message indicating you have a conflict, select another section of the same course or another course that is not held during the same time as any other class on your schedule or reach out to the Department and/or your academic advisor. If you receive a message that you have reached your maximum credits, complete and submit the [Request to Exceed Maximum Registration Credits](#) form to obtain permission.

You may then attempt to register for more classes and print your schedule when finished.

From the [myShip](#) Experience portal> Sign into **myShip Experience**>On the **Registration** experience card, click **Registration Self- Service**

Click on **Register for Classes**

## **MU-SU MSW PROGRAM OPTIONS**

In the MU-SU MSW program, students may choose the in-person program or the online delivery option. Please note that class meeting times are listed on the schedule at the time of registration and on the student's class schedule which can be found in the students portal per the universities attendance policies, students are expected to attend class as scheduled.

### **Online Delivery**

The MU-SU MSW online program offers both synchronous and asynchronous courses. In synchronous learning, students will follow a specific weekly schedule to participate in live lectures and discussions with instructors and classmates. For example, a class may be scheduled to meet synchronously every Monday from 5 PM to 6 PM. Students will also have readings and assignments to complete independently. Asynchronous learning allows students to engage with course materials at their preferred time but with due dates provided by the instructors. The instructor will provide a sequence of units for students to progress through, including assigned readings, online quizzes, discussion boards, and more. Also, the instructor will offer guidance, feedback, and assessments as needed.

### **Online vs in-person program status**

#### **Shippensburg Policy**

Students are admitted into the program delivery method that they apply for. Seats for in-person classes are for in-person students and online seats are for online students. If a student would like to change their program delivery method or they would like to take a certain class in another delivery method, they must waitlist the class at registration time. If there are seats available in the class after registration, the department chair and MSW program director will confirm moving the student to the change section. Students should register for their regular program delivery method regardless so that they have a seat. This policy only applies to required classes as all electives are offered online. If a student wants to change their entire program delivery method they should email the MSW Program Director who will confirm with the Department Chair if space is available.

### **Regular Standing and Advanced Standing**

Students are required to complete either a 60-credit Regular Standing program (for those without an undergraduate degree in social work or students with an undergraduate degree in social work who do not meet the qualifications for Advanced Standing) or a 36-credit Advanced Standing program (for those who hold an earned undergraduate social work degree and meet the qualifications for Advanced Standing). Both options may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis.

### **REGULAR STANDING (60 CREDITS)**

The Regular Standing program is open to all applicants who hold an undergraduate degree in any discipline. This program is year-round. Students enrolling in the 60-credit program must complete:

- 39 credit hours of required coursework (see above)
- 12 credit hours of field practicum (internship)
- 9 credit hours of electives

## **ADVANCED STANDING (36 CREDITS)**

Applicants who hold an undergraduate social work degree from a CSWE-accredited institution in the last eight (8) years with an overall GPA of 2.8 and a major GPA of 3.25 or higher on a 4.0 scale may qualify for advanced standing status. This program is year-round. Students enrolled in the 36-credit program must complete:

- 18 credit hours of required coursework
- 6 credit hours of field practicum (internship)
- 12 credit hours of electives

## **FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME OPTIONS**

The MSW program may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis. The 60-credit regular standing program can be completed in 2 years of full-time study, or 4 years of part-time study. Some part-time students may be eligible to complete the program in 3 years. Please note that practicum courses must be taken concurrently with the appropriate practice course (see Course Progression charts below). The Advanced Standing program (36-credit program) also may be completed on a full-time (1-year) or part-time (2-year) basis.

Students should anticipate a three-hour time commitment for each class, which may consist of a direct three-hour session, for example, 6 to 9 PM, or a two-hour session, for instance, 6 to 8 PM, supplemented by an extra hour of asynchronous learning. The asynchronous hour will be completed based on the deadlines provided by the instructor.

Course progression maps are included in the back of this handbook.

## **PRACTICUM**

Practicum courses require 400 hours in the Generalist year and 500 hours in the Specialization year. They span the entire academic year in one placement. Placements will be arranged with the approval of the Practicum Director at your home campus. More specific information is provided in the MSW Practicum Manual. Students should check with their Practicum Director for questions about requirements and forms related to their practicum. All forms are completed in the online practicum management program.

## **Certifications, Certificates, and Dual Degrees**

### **CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS**

#### **School Social Work Certification**

The School Social Work Certification is designed to prepare social work students who wish to practice in Pennsylvania with the required knowledge, skills, and expertise to support the academic, career, and personal-social development needs of diverse, vulnerable, at-risk Pre-K-23 students and their families. Additionally, the school social work certification requires practicum completion during the specialization year in an approved public school setting. An approved public school setting is defined by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a local education entity. Public school entities are defined as public schools, charter schools and intermediate units.

The School Social Work Certification is available at both universities. Millersville University students can find additional information [here](#).

Shippensburg University students can find additional information [here](#).

## **CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS**

The MSW program is pleased to offer a number of certificates that students may complete while in the MSW program or after. These certificates allow students to tailor or complement their MSW studies. Millersville and Shippensburg universities offer a range of certificates; all MSW students are eligible to complete all certificates at either university. Students interested in pursuing certificates should contact the MSW Director at their home campus.

### **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

**The Advance Children, Youth, and Families Certificate is for students enrolled in or who have completed a master's degree in social work to provide culturally competent services to vulnerable children and families through a range of public and private agencies at various levels of practice. The focused curriculum includes coursework on clinical skills to work effectively with children and their families to promote positive outcomes, and macro skills and strategies to develop productive change in service delivery systems. Students receive instruction in evidence-based practice and management strategies to develop competency in working with children and youth in a variety of contexts. Students complete 15 credits leading to the Children, Youth, and Families Certificate.**

Courses required for the Advanced Children, Youth, and Families Certificate may be found [here](#).

### **Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health (MSW+TIBH)**

The School of Social Work offers a graduate-level certificate in Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health (TIBH). The certificate comprises two areas of specialization within the larger framework of expressive arts.

Leading practitioners across disciplines have adopted a trauma-informed lens that incorporates a deep understanding of the types and impact of trauma on neurobiology, behavioral health, and relationships. Our certificate is grounded in trauma-informed behavioral health practices. Certificate students will come with knowledge and skills associated with these practices *or* gain them through trauma courses that they will take as requirements for this certificate.

#### *Expressive Arts TIBH*

Expressive arts combine visual arts, drama, music, writing, movement, nature-based interventions, and other creative processes to foster healing, personal growth, learning, and community development.

#### *Equine Assisted Therapy & Learning TIBH*



Equine-assisted strategies are widely accepted and utilized to address a variety of mental health issues, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, and substance use. Benefits of equine-assisted therapy and learning transcend categories of diagnostic mental and emotional health, providing a foundation from which clients and learners can explore key relationship issues, including trust, emotional regulation, connection, empathy, communication, and healthy attachment. Partnerships with horses require clients and learners to regulate their emotions, remain present, and move with awareness. These components of mindfulness are required in horse-human interactions and support the development of internal calm and balance (equanimity), while providing opportunities for trust in the context of relationship. Working with horses requires clients and learners to grow, both physically and mentally, building a healthier self-image and increased confidence.

This curriculum will provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to utilize equine-assisted and nature-based interventions to practice professionally with diverse clients and groups at all levels (micro, mezzo, macro) of practice.

Courses required for the Trauma-Informed Behavioral Health Certificate may be found [here](#).

### **Home and School Visitor (MSW+HSV)**

The Home and School Visitor certification is designed to provide students with the required knowledge and skills to work collaboratively in a school setting at all systems levels. Students looking to complete the HSV certificate will complete their specialization year practicum in an educational setting. The HSV certificate will allow students to work in some school settings but not at the School Social Worker Certification level. Courses required for the Home and School Visitor Certificate may be found [here](#).

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

### **Behavior Specialist Certificate (BSC)**

The Behavior Specialist Certificate is offered by the Department of Psychology at Shippensburg University and is available to all our MSW students through an agreement with the Department of Social Work and Gerontology at Shippensburg University. In order to earn the certificate, the student needs to take the following psychology classes which count as MSW electives: PSY 518- Behavior Analysis; PSY 539- Community Psychology, and PSY 543- Behavioral Treatment and Systems Support. These psychology classes are offered online, in eight-week semesters. Students can learn about this certificate [here](#).

## **OTHER PROGRAM OPTIONS**

### **Child Welfare Education for Leadership**

The Child Welfare Education for Leadership (CWEL) program is a cooperative effort among the [United States Administration for Children and Families](#), the [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services](#), the [Pennsylvania Child and Youth Administrators](#), and twelve accredited schools of social work in Pennsylvania. Its goal is to strengthen public child welfare services in Pennsylvania by providing educational opportunities at the graduate level for public child

welfare personnel. Qualified students who are admitted to any of the approved schools on either a full- or part-time basis may receive substantial financial support in return for a contractual obligation to continue employment with the sponsoring agency following their studies. Additional information on the CWEL program may be found [here](#).

## **DUAL DEGREES**

Please contact your home campus MSW Director to discuss the options.

### **Master of Social Work & Master of Science in Emergency Management (MSW+MSEM)**

A dual degree offered by the Millersville University School of Social Work and the Millersville University Center for Disaster Research and Education prepares students to work in planning, preparation, response and human service and resource development for communities and individuals. Students complete their specialization field placement in an emergency management setting or in a traditional setting with specified emergency management activities. The MSEM program is 100% online. Students need to apply and be admitted to both programs to pursue this joint degree. It is not required that students be admitted to both programs at the same time. Students who complete both programs will earn a Master of Social Work and a Master of Science in Emergency Management.

More information on MSW+MSEM dual degrees program can be found [here](#).

### **Master of Social Work & Master of Education in Sport Management (MSW+MEd)**

A dual degree offered by the Millersville University School of Social Work and the Millersville University Wellness & Sport Science Department allows students to understand the frameworks of social work theory and practice, as well as the management and administration aspects of knowledge of the mental health factors that impact athletes and to advocate for wellness in athletics. Students complete their specialization field placement in a sport management setting or in a traditional setting with specified sport management activities. Students need to apply and be admitted to both programs to pursue this joint degree. It is not required that students be admitted to both programs at the same time. Students who complete both programs will earn a Master of Social Work and a Master of Education in Sport Management

More information on the MSW+MEd dual degrees program can be found [here](#).

### **Master of Social Work and Master of Public Administration (MSW & MPA)**

A dual degree offered by the Shippensburg University School of Social Work and the Shippensburg University Department of Political Sciences allows students to understand the frameworks of social work theory and practice, as well as in general public management theory, techniques, and skills. The students need to apply and be admitted to both programs to pursue this joint degree. It is not required that students be admitted to both programs at the same time. Students who complete both programs will earn a Master of Social Work and a Master of Public Administration.

### **Information Technology**

Information technology is used to enhance our program. Students should have primary access to a computer with a camera during their time in the program. While some courses may be fully

online with synchronous (which means that all students “meet” for class at an assigned time) or asynchronous (which means that students work at their pace as designed by the course instructor) some online work may be required in all classes. Students entering the program should have basic computer skills, such as those found in an office environment and be prepared to learn using the resources offered by each campus.

Students are provided free access to various software programs, such as Microsoft Office 365, Zoom, SPSS, and Qualtrics. Microsoft Office 365 provides access to Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel and allows the use of Microsoft Teams which supports collaborative projects.

The MU-SU MSW program utilizes D2L Brightspace as our comprehensive online learning management system (LMS). The LMS provides students with password-protected access to the course assignments, discussions, syllabus, announcements from the professor, email, grades, and other course components from any computer that is internet-ready. All students will need to learn how to use the LMS effectively. Training in the use of the LMS is provided at each campus.

**NOTE:** Students who take classes offered by faculty not from their home campus access the D2L Brightspace program at the faculty’s campus. Specific instructions for accessing the D2L Brightspace of the other campus are given prior to the start of the class to all students participating in these classes.

Another widely used program is Zoom, which allows faculty to utilize online video and audio sessions. Students may be asked to use Zoom to participate in their classes, and they may also use it for groupwork meetings with faculty or other students and student groups. Each student has a Zoom account provided by their home university.

Please contact the Information Technology department at your home campus with technology questions and concerns. The following information may be useful for the cases when you need help:

Shippensburg University	Millersville University
<a href="mailto:helpdesk@ship.edu">helpdesk@ship.edu</a> (717) 477-4357 After Hours and Weekends: (866) 832-2319 Email <a href="mailto:helpdesk@desire2learn.com">helpdesk@desire2learn.com</a> Web Resources: <a href="https://ship.edu/IDWT/Brightspace_Student_Orientation/">https://ship.edu/IDWT/Brightspace_Student_Orientation/</a>	<a href="mailto:help@millersville.edu">help@millersville.edu</a> (717) 871-7777 After Hours and Weekends: (877) 325-7778 Online <a href="https://community.brightspace.com/millersville/s/">community.brightspace.com/millersville/s/</a> Web Resources: <a href="https://wiki.millersville.edu/display/d2ldocs/Home">https://wiki.millersville.edu/display/d2ldocs/Home</a>

### **SECTION III: ADMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Admission to the MU-SU MSW program is a competitive process. All applications are reviewed by the MSW program admissions committee. The MU-SU MSW program is a cohort program. Students who are accepted to the program may begin their studies in May or August. Some students may be able to take courses in a non-degree status at other times. Students should discuss their needs with the MSW Program Coordinator at their home campus. The first of the two six-week MSW summer term\* of 2025 will start approximately mid-May. The deadline for application submission is April 15.

**NOTE:** The dates of the MSW program's summer terms differ from the university's summer terms.

#### **Admission Requirements**

##### **Regular Standing Program**

**Applicants must have earned a bachelor's degree with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.8 on a 4.0 scale from a regionally accredited undergraduate institution. If a student has attended more than one undergraduate institution, all grades that go towards the degree will be used in the calculation of the overall GPA. Students must submit transcripts from all undergraduate institutions at the time of application.**

##### **Advanced Standing Program**

**Applicants will be considered for the Advanced Standing program if they have a baccalaureate degree earned in the last eight (8) years from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work program with an overall GPA of 3.0 and a major GPA of 3.25 or higher on a 4.0 scale and a recommendation from the Program Director or designee of their undergraduate social work program. The Recommendation for Advanced Standing form is available [online](#). Students must submit transcripts from all undergraduate institutions at the time of application.**

##### **Entrance Examinations**

The MU-SU MSW program does not require entrance exams as part of admissions.

##### **Exemption from Generalist (First Year) Courses**

Students who do not otherwise qualify for Advanced Standing status may be eligible for exemption from certain Generalist courses under strict guidelines as outlined in this section. With the exception of practice and practicum instruction courses, students who earned a grade of B or higher within the past eight (8) years in courses that were part of a CSWE-accredited social work program may be eligible for exemptions from first-year generalist courses with similar content. Exemptions will reduce the total number of credits a student must earn to graduate. The Admissions Committee will notify the applicant of any exemptions in the offer of admission.

##### **Life Experience**

This program does not grant academic credit for life or work experience.

### **Personal and Professional Qualities**

Applicants must evidence a combination of personal qualities and values that are considered essential for the professional practice of social work. An application statement, a comprehensive resume, and professional references are required. The Admissions Committee may request a personal interview or additional information about an applicant, when necessary, to make a fully informed admissions decision.

### **Application Statement and Resume**

Applicants should submit a four to five-page statement describing events and experiences that led them to apply for a master's degree in social work, how the MSW will further the applicant's career goals, and their experiences with issues of diversity, social justice, and human rights in practice and/or life. Applicants also must submit a comprehensive professional resume outlining education, work, and volunteer experiences related to the social work field and other employment-related activities.

### **Professional References**

#### *Regular Standing and Advanced Standing*

Three professional references are needed. One or more of the references must be from a faculty member, unless the applicant graduated more than five years ago, and one from an employer or supervisor. The third reference should reflect the applicant's academic and or professional readiness for graduate study in social work. Students should attempt a reference from a social work practicum instructor, if available. Applicants who have no volunteer or professional experience in a social service agency may submit a professional reference from a work supervisor. References from personal friends or family members are not acceptable for this requirement.

#### *Advanced Standing Practicum Instruction Recommendations*

Students applying for Advanced Standing status and whose undergraduate social work degree was earned within the two years prior to the date they would begin graduate studies must have a reference from their practicum instructor, or if the practicum instructor is not available, from the Practicum Director of their undergraduate program. This requirement is in addition to the Advanced Standing recommendation from the student's undergraduate Program Director (see "Advanced Standing Program" section above).

### **Background Checks**

No background checks are required for program admission. However, prior to entering practicum, students may need to provide some clearances, such as ChildLine clearances, criminal record checks, and FBI clearances. A prior criminal record does not necessarily exclude a student from completing the MSW program. If a student has a criminal record, some practicum options may not be available. We work diligently to place all students in practicum. Applicants with criminal records should contact the MSW Program Director prior to application for additional information.

### **English as a Second Language**

If English is not the student's native or official language, they need to send their official results

of English proficiency directly from a testing agency that administers the **TOEFL** or **IELTS** to the respective Graduate Admissions Office.

### **International Students**

#### **Millersville University**

Millersville University warmly welcomes international students to its Master of Social Work program. For international students, specific requirements must be met to matriculate. The Department of International Admissions is dedicated to assisting international students through these processes. They provide comprehensive support, including guidance on visa applications, and ensure that all necessary steps for entering the United States are completed. Millersville University and the School of Social Work are committed to your academic success. We are available to assist with any course progression or classwork questions.

#### **Shippensburg University**

Shippensburg University welcomes international students from all over the world. Interested students should start the application process by contacting the Admissions Office or by navigating to the International Applications section linked below, where you will find information about academic requirements, English language requirements, financial support, I-20 issuance and student life. <https://www.ship.edu/admissions/international/>

### **Transfer Students**

With advance permission of the respective MSW Program Director and Department Chair and as part of a planned program, a student may transfer credits from other graduate programs.

Students may transfer a total of nine (9) graduate credit hours. All nine credits may be from another MSW program, or up to six (6) credits may be from a related field; these courses may not necessarily be required course, but they may be transferrable as electives. Graduate credit earned more than five years prior to the date you begin your MSW program does not qualify for transfer credits. Students may only transfer credits from other accredited schools provided they are in good standing in those schools. Courses must be listed on an official transcript with a grade of B or higher. Condensed one-week graduate courses do not qualify for transfer. Students should review the graduate course catalogue at their home university for the transfer of credit policy and other policies that apply to graduate study.

Students looking to transfer credit to [Millersville University](#) should complete the required form and submit it to the MSW Program Director.

Students looking to transfer credit to Shippensburg University should contact the MSW Program Director.

The MU-SU MSW Program Admissions Committee may recommend a waiver to the 9-credit transfer limit to the Dean in the unusual situation where:

1. An applicant has completed social work generalist curriculum courses (maximum 30 credits) in a graduate program at another CSWE accredited social work program, and

2. A careful review of that generalist curriculum indicates that it requires development of the same knowledge and skills as those required in the MU-SU MSW Program.

It is the applicant's responsibility to make relevant material available for review. Criteria to be used for assessing course credit transfer from another accredited MSW program include analogous course objectives, similarity of theoretical frameworks, comparable content, textbooks and readings, similarity between assignments used to achieve objectives and comparable level of earned credits in terms of course work. Only courses for which a grade of "B" or better was obtained are eligible to be accepted for transfer.

### **Home Campus**

Applicants choose to apply to either Millersville University or Shippensburg University. If all slots are full at one campus, successful applicants will be given the option to enroll through the other campus, if slots are available. Applicants wanting admission to a specific campus may also be placed on a waiting list if all slots are full. Should a student wish to change their home institution (i.e., a student applied and was accepted to Millersville (thus Millersville is the "home" university or vice versa), the student should contact their current MSW Director to discuss this process.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Your education is an investment in your future. Please follow the following links to review tuition and fees for each institution.

[Millersville University tuition and fees](#)

Shippensburg University Tuition and fees: <https://www.ship.edu/paying/tuition-fees/graduate/>

### **Financial Aid, Stipends, and Scholarships**

The Offices of Financial Aid at each campus can assist all students, regardless of their economic resources, in obtaining financial assistance and the collection of student tuition and fees, while maintaining the fiscal and regulatory integrity of the University's financial programs. Students should contact the Office of Financial Aid at their home campus. More information on financial aid can be found on the [Millersville University website](#) and the [Shippensburg University website](#).

***Students should check with their respective financial aid office prior to adding or dropping any courses after the initial approval of aid.***

## **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

### **Financial Aid**

Students interested in financial aid should contact the Financial Aid Office. The instructions and regulations for federal financial aid often change and the Financial Aid staff can best advise students.



## **GRADUATE ASSISTANTSHIPS**

### **Graduate Assistantships and Student Employment**

[Millersville University](#) offers graduate assistantships to prospective and currently enrolled graduate students who have been formally admitted into a master's or doctoral degree program. Opportunities are available for review and application through the University's hiring portal, PeopleAdmin. Applicants will be asked to upload a current resume and respond to several questions. Some postings require a cover letter. Most positions require on-campus work.

#### **Full Time Graduate Assistants**

- work 20 hours per week (on average) for total of 300 hours in Fall and in Spring
- earn \$6,000 annual stipend, paid out bi-weekly during Fall and Spring terms
- receive 18 credits of tuition waiver for the academic year

#### **Part Time Graduate Assistants**

- work 10 hours per week (on average) for total of 150 hours in Fall and in Spring
- earn \$3,000 annual stipend, paid out bi-weekly during Fall and Spring terms
- receive 9 credits of tuition waiver for the academic year

Graduate Assistant opportunities are designed to provide the student with relevant experiences that will help them continue to develop the skillsets of a professional.

Resources and application information for students interested in a graduate assistantship can be found [here](#).

Students also may apply for available student employment positions on campus.

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

Shippensburg University provides financial assistance to graduate students through graduate assistantships (GAs), student life graduate assistantships (SLGAs), graduate residence director appointments, student loans, and student payroll positions (SPPs).

Graduate assistant appointments can provide you with the opportunity to participate in professionally related activities with faculty and administrators. These assignments can extend your learning experience beyond the classroom and enhance your professional development.

GA and SLGA appointments are awarded on a competitive basis, without regard to financial need. They provide a tuition waiver as well as compensation for work performed. SPP appointments are also awarded on a competitive basis with priority given to graduate students.



SPPs do NOT provide tuition waivers. Resources and application information for students interested in a graduate assistantship can be found [here](#).

### **Scholarships**

[Millersville University](#) offers several scholarship opportunities to help defray costs. Please click on the appropriate link to learn about specific scholarship opportunities available to MU students.

#### **Richard Cecil Todd & Claudia Penncock Todd Graduate Fellowship Award**

Awarded as a fellowship within the graduate school. The Todd Fellowship(s) shall recognize and encourage excellence in scholarship, research, and/or writing among graduate students.

#### **Distinguished Graduate Fellows Award**

Awarded to a Pennsylvania resident studying full-time in a master's degree program. Selection is based on merit as demonstrated by undergraduate GPA and other graduate application materials. Financial need may be considered. May be renewed for a second year providing the student remains a graduate student in good academic standing.

### **Loans**

#### **Lancaster Dollars for Higher Learning**

Lancaster Dollars for Higher Learning is committed to providing interest-free loans to Lancaster County students based on financial need. Without regard to race, ethnicity, color, creed, gender or age, LDHL has helped students from Lancaster County realize their dreams of attending accredited post-secondary institutions full-time. For more information, please visit <https://lancdollars.org/>

### **Fellowships**

#### **John Frederick Steinman Foundation**

Each year, one or more fellowships may be awarded by the Fellowship Committee of the John Frederick Steinman Foundation to qualified persons seeking advanced study in the fields of psychiatry, psychology or social work. The fellowships may be renewed for a second year by the trustees upon review of evidence of progress by the fellow during study for which the fellowship was granted.

#### *Eligibility*

The award will be available only to applicants in the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and social work, as follows: Applicants holding bachelor's degrees (or more advanced degrees) from an accredited college or university who now wish to engage in advanced study for the purpose of becoming trained social workers. Applicants holding bachelor's degrees (or more advanced degrees) may be considered for special graduate training in mental health practice.

## **STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORT**

Millersville University aims to support student research. While some opportunities are limited by programs of study or reserved for undergraduate students, students should proactively seek all available support. More information can be found here: [Millersville University Student Research Support](#).

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

### **Coverdell Fellows Program**

Shippensburg University's Social Work and Gerontology Department is proud to partner with the Peace Corps to offer the Coverdell Fellows Program. The program is a graduate fellowship for returned Peace Corps Volunteers wishing to pursue a Master of Social Work. The [Benefits for Coverdell Fellows Program](#) are the following: (a) part-time graduate assistantship: 6 credits per semester tuition waiver (\$6,192 annual for in-state and \$9,288 for out-of-state), (b) graduate assistant salary (up to \$1,670 per semester, totaling \$3,340 annual pay), (c) graduate program application fee (\$45 waived).

## **GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT PROGRAM**

The Graduate Research Grant Program is designed to provide financial support to graduate students for research or scholarly activities related to their program of study to enable them to better understand the scientific process, experience discovery, develop their analytical and communication skills, and gain exposure to national ideas through the presentation of the results of their research at conferences. The Graduate Research Grant Program is funded by the [School of Graduate Studies](#) and the [Institute for Public Service and Sponsored Programs](#).

## **SECTION IV: ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Millersville University and Shippensburg University are member institutions of the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education (PASSHE). As member institutions, the universities follow PASSHE policies. Each university may have additional specific policies that apply to its students. Below is information on some of the significant policies and procedures that pertain to the MSW program. Students should consult the graduate catalog of your home campus for more detailed information and other policies for a full list of applicable policies.

Please note that students in a graduate program in social work are simultaneously entering academic and professional practice. Therefore, students must meet both academic performance and professional performance criteria.

### **Academic Performance Criteria**

#### MSW Student Academic and Performance Policy

## **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

### **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Per university policy, graduate degree students are required to maintain a 3.0 grade-point average. A student who fails to meet the scholarship standards may be dismissed from a graduate degree program. If a student falls below a 3.0 average, they will be placed on academic

probation. Failure to raise the grade point average to a minimum of 3.0 during the next semester in which the student is enrolled will result in dismissal from graduate studies at Millersville University. The summer sessions are considered one semester. Graduate students who earn two grades of C+, C or C-, or any combination thereof, will receive an academic warning, regardless of GPA. Earning a third grade of C+, C or C- will result in academic dismissal regardless of GPA. This includes any courses which have been repeated and replaced with a higher grade. A grade of C+, C or C- earned at Millersville University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course. A graduate student earning an F grade in any course will be dismissed from graduate study at Millersville University. Students who are academically dismissed will be notified in writing by the Registrar's Office. An F grade earned at Millersville University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course. Procedures for appealing a grade or program dismissal are described below.

### **Degree Candidacy**

A formal admission to the degree candidacy process takes place after a minimum of 12 credits have been completed. Millersville University MSW program faculty members evaluate students to determine if they have the potential for completing the requirements of the MSW social work program. Qualifications are based on academic performance in line with university standards and if the student has demonstrated ethical behavior and values and commitment to social work as a career. The social work faculty has the right to dismiss from the program at any time students found not qualified for social work practice.

### **Time Limit**

Progress toward the MSW degree may be pursued over several years, which need not be in succession but must be concluded within a five-year period. The five-year period begins the semester a student is accepted into the MSW program. A reevaluation of coursework taken prior to admission to a degree program and an extension of time, usually an additional year, beyond this five-year limit may be granted by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning at the request of the student and upon the recommendation of the advisor and MSW Program Director.

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

### **Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Students whose cumulative GPA drops below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation. Students on probation must raise their GPA to 3.0 by the end of the next semester (or full summer term) in which they register. Students who fail to meet the conditions of academic probation are subject to dismissal. A C grade earned at Shippensburg University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course. An F grade earned at Shippensburg University may not be made up at another institution of higher learning for the same course. Students who are academically dismissed will be notified in writing by the Registrar's Office. A student may appeal dismissal by writing a letter to the College Dean (with a copy to your department chair) by the date indicated in the dismissal letter. All appeals will be considered by the Academic Review Committee. Procedures for appealing a grade or program dismissal are described below.

## **Minimum Academic Standards**

As a graduate student at Shippensburg University, you are expected to maintain satisfactory academic standing, which requires a QPA of 3.0 (B) or better each semester. If your QPA drops below 3.0, you will be placed on academic probation, and if your QPA drops below 2.0, you will be dismissed from the degree or professional certification program. Students on academic probation must raise their QPA to 3.0 by the end of the next semester in which they register (Spring term semester = January-May; Full summer term = Summer term A and B; Fall term semester = August-January) or they will be dismissed from the degree or professional certification program. If a student must take undergraduate prerequisites while pursuing a graduate degree or professional certification, the specific department academic standards for minimum QPA apply. In all cases where graduate or certification programs answer to and must meet accreditation standards, the departments administering these programs impose and enforce the minimum academic requirements.

## **Time Limit**

All coursework and research for graduate degree programs must be completed within a **seven-year** period beginning the semester you matriculate in the degree program. Extensions must be requested through your department chair and approved by your college dean and the Dean of Graduate Studies. The request is to contain an analysis of the previous coursework and how it applies to the current program taking into account if the content of the course has changed significantly and needs to be made up, a list of the coursework yet to be completed, and a deadline for the completion of the degree. This policy does not apply to students who have been dismissed from their program and have been re-admitted after separation from the university. The policy regarding transfer credits applies in these circumstances.

## **Grading**

The letter grades used in the MU-SU MSW program courses and their associated grade point values are as follows: A (4.0), A- (3.7), B+ (3.3), B (3.0), B- (2.7), C (2.0) and F (0.0). Grades of P (Pass) and F (Fail) are used for practicum. In addition, W (Withdrawal) and I (Incomplete) may be used. Q (Deferred grade) is used on the Shippensburg campus only.

Each course syllabus outlines the specific assignments students are responsible for completing during the semester. The syllabi also provide point or percentage systems that are used to determine grades within each course. This information is provided to students at the beginning of the semester for each course. The syllabi are posted on the learning management system (LMS) site for each course so that the information is accessible to the student from any computer. Faculty members are available to meet with students to further clarify expectations in individual courses. Faculty members determine grading criteria for their courses.

## **Grade Appeals Process**

The grade appeals process is different at each university. Students need to follow the process of their home campus where they are enrolled, regardless of the faculty member's home institution.

## **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

### **Grade Appeal**

When a student disagrees with an academic determination by a faculty member the student and the faculty member must meet, within 30 days of the release of the academic determination, to discuss the disputed issue and attempt, in good faith, to resolve the matter. The student has the responsibility to contact the faculty member so the meeting can be arranged. If the student and faculty member are unable to meet within the specified time period, the student must contact the faculty member's Department Chair within 10 calendar days of the above time period to move to the next phase of the appeal. If the student and the faculty member are unable to mutually resolve the dispute, the student must file a written appeal with the faculty member's Department Chair within 10 calendar days of the student/faculty member discussion. The student is advised to set forth in detail the basis for the appeal and provide written documentation in support of the appeal. The Department Chair will request a written statement from the faculty member and may meet with the faculty member as well. The Department Chair will review the appeal and any supporting documentation and then meet with the student. The Department Chair will notify the student and the faculty member of their decision within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. If the Department Chair's decision does not resolve the dispute, the student may submit a written appeal with the appropriate College Dean within 10 calendar days from the date of the Department Chair's decision. The student should include any written documentation in support of the appeal. The College Dean will request a written statement from the faculty member and may meet with the faculty member as well. The College Dean will review the appeal and any supporting documentation and will meet with the student. The College Dean will notify the student, the Department Chair, and the faculty member of their decision within 10 calendar days of receipt of the appeal. The decision of the College Dean is final and not subject to further review. Procedures for appealing a grade determination may be found [here](#).

### **Academic Dismissal and Appeal**

Students may appeal dismissal to the Graduate Academic Appeals Committee (GAAC). Students who have been dismissed and believe specific, unusual circumstances affected their academic performance may request a review by appealing to the GAAC. For the appeal to be considered before the next semester, it must be received by the committee by the date specified in the notice of dismissal. Information and forms regarding graduate appeals may be found [here](#) or by calling 717-871-4723. After GAAC's decision, if an appellant believes the appeal process was not administered as prescribed herein, the appellant may pursue an appeal of the process, but not the academic decision, in writing, to the dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning. Such an appeal must be made within 10 business days from the date of the decision letter from the chairperson of the GAAC. The appellant is advised to provide as much written documentation as possible, describing why the process was not administered as prescribed herein, and any supporting materials. The decision of the dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning regarding the process appeal is final and not subject to further review. Any student who is dismissed from the University for poor academic performance may apply to be readmitted to their academic program one calendar year from the date of the dismissal, provided it is their first dismissal. A student may only appeal for reinstatement one time. Upon the second dismissal the student may not appeal and is no longer eligible for admission to any Millersville University graduate program.

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

A graduate student contemplating filing a grade appeal understands that consistent with the practice of academic freedom, faculty bear responsibility for assigning course grades in accordance with professionally acceptable standards that have previously been communicated to students verbally or in writing. At the same time, students have the right to ensure grades are calculated accurately and consistently, fairly and equitably, and without discrimination.

### **Basis for Appealing Final Course Grade**

Graduate students may appeal a final course grade assigned to them by an instructor based on one of three conditions:

- The course instructor miscalculated the final course grade.
- The course instructor committed an oversight in calculating the final course grade.
- The course instructor acted in an arbitrary and/or capricious manner in assigning grades to the student, including the final course grade to the student. For an instructor to act in an arbitrary, and/or capricious manner in assigning grades is defined as follows:
  1. The instructor assigned a course grade to a student on some basis other than performance in the course.
  2. The instructor assigned a course grade to a student by resorting to unreasonable standards different from those applied to other students in that course.
  3. The instructor assigned a course grade to a student in a manner that represented a substantial, unreasonable, and unannounced departure from the instructor's previously articulated standards.

### **Timetable and Procedures for the Grade Appeal Process**

Compliance with all timelines set forth in this policy is required. A student may initiate a grade appeal within thirty (30) calendar days following the first day of the next regular (fall or spring) academic semester. However, appeals from the winter term shall be filed within sixty (60) calendar days following the first day of spring semester; appeals from the summer terms shall be filed within thirty (30) calendar days from the first day of fall semester. Should the deadline for completing a step in the grade appeal process set forth below fall on a day the university is not open for business, that deadline shall be moved to the next date the university is open for business.

*Step 1. Meeting with Department Chairperson* - Within seven (7) calendar days of receiving a completed grade appeal form, the program chairperson (or designee) will notify the faculty member that a formal appeal has been filed and shall meet individually and/or jointly, if useful, with the student and the faculty member to discuss the disputed grade in an effort to mediate an amicable resolution to disagreement over the final grade assigned. Such meeting(s) may occur in person or via conference call if necessary. The mediated result must be given in writing to both the student and faculty.

*Step 2. Formal Program Grade Appeal Hearing* - If the student finds the mediated effort fails to address their concerns or achieve the desired results, they must notify the department chairperson in writing within fourteen (14) calendar days of the meeting with the program chairperson (or designee) of their desire to continue on to the formal grade appeal hearing before the Academic Appeals Committee of the program. Failure to meet this fourteen (14) day

deadline for proceeding with the formal grade appeal shall result in the forfeiture of a student's appeal rights.

*Step 3. Scheduling of the Academic Appeals Hearing* - Upon notification by the student of their desire to continue with the appeal, the Academic Appeals Committee shall have fourteen (14) calendar days to conduct a hearing on the matter and to issue its findings and recommendations. An equal number of students and faculty, but in no case fewer than four members, shall be present at an Appeals Hearing.

*Step 4. Conduct of the Academic Appeals Hearing* - The chairpersons of the Academic Appeals Committee shall have sole responsibility for the conduct of the hearing. Prior to the hearing the student shall submit to the committee a written statement setting forth the issue(s) in the dispute and the desired resolution. Only the student and the faculty member in the dispute have the right to attend the hearing. Both the student and faculty member involved in the grade appeal shall have the right to be present during the grade appeal hearing itself. Both the student and the faculty member have the right to introduce materials into the hearing that are directly relevant to the assignment of the final grade in the course, including such items as: Course syllabi as given to the student; graded assignments such as, but not limited to, journals, research papers, group projects, examinations and other material relevant to the determination of the student's final course grade

*Decision of the Academic Appeals Committee* - Only members of the graduate Academic Appeals Committee shall be present during the discussion of and deliberations on the outcome of the student's grade appeal. The Academic Appeals Committee's deliberations shall be viewed as confidential, and no transcripts, notes, or records shall be made regarding their discussion other than a record of their final decision. The record of the final decision will be maintained in the department office for three years. The committee has the power to decide the outcome of the final grade dispute by simple majority vote taken by secret ballot. A tie vote upholds the faculty member's decision in the case. If the committee sustains the appeal (i.e., rules in favor of the student) a grade change form will be sent to the Registrar's Office after being signed by the program chair. With the exception of the grade, no part of these proceedings will become part of the student's official academic record. In addition, no part of these proceedings will become part of the faculty member's record or file. The evidence, proceedings, and the final decision of the Academic Appeals Committee shall remain confidential.

*Request for Reconsideration* - A student whose grade appeal has been denied may file a written request for reconsideration within seven (7) calendar days with the appropriate academic dean of the college in which the academic program is housed upon the following grounds: (a) the student can demonstrate substantial procedural irregularities or inequities in the conduct of the hearing; (b) the student provides substantial new evidence that was not available at the time of the hearing that would have had a bearing on the outcome of the appeal and (c) the student is able to demonstrate that the Academic Appeals Committee's decision was erroneous or unfair.

In the absence of a written request for reconsideration of the committee's decision filed with the appropriate academic dean in the college wherein the appeal arose within the specified seven (7) day period, the committee's initial findings and action on the appeal filed shall be final.

*Reconsideration of the Academic Appeals Committee Determination* - Within seven (7) calendar days of the **request for reconsideration**, the academic dean of the college in which the grade appeal arose shall determine whether a compelling reason has been presented for setting aside the initial decision of the Academic Appeals Committee. If the dean finds a compelling reason exists to take such action, they may direct the committee to reconsider their findings and determination or take other appropriate action consistent with the guidelines. If the dean does not find a compelling reason to ask the Academic Appeals Committee to reconsider, the dean communicates with the student and this record will be maintained by the dean's office for three years. Upon direction from the dean, the Academic Appeals Committee shall have ten (10) calendar days to reconvene and reconsider their initial decision on the grade appeal. The committee in undertaking such review and reconsideration shall examine and take into account the concerns raised by the dean. **The decision of the Grade Appeals Committee, following review and reconsideration shall be final.**

### **Academic Integrity**

Students must maintain academic integrity. Students are responsible for understanding plagiarism. Students may be subject to disciplinary action if they use someone else's work, creating the impression that it is their own original work, if they make up false information for an academic project, or if they forge academic credentials or documents. Plagiarism also includes writing a paper and using content from a book, article, or internet site without proper citation or failing to paraphrase or restate the content in one's own words. Students are not to use Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the creator of any assignment. Students should discuss the use of AI with their instructors. Proper citation must accompany anything other than original thought: direct quotations, paraphrased or summarized content. The home University Policy on Academic Dishonesty is also applicable.

Because this program includes a significant amount of online activity, there are additional academic integrity issues to be considered. It should be understood by all students that only the student of record is permitted to complete assignments and submit written work in the online environment. It is considered an act of academic dishonesty to permit someone else to submit work that is represented as work that has been completed by the student of record.

### **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

Students are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another, to cheat on an examination, to allow another person to commit, or assist another in committing an act of academic dishonesty, corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced. The Academic Honesty Policy for Students may be found [here](#).

### **Plagiarism, Fabrication, Cheating, and Academic Misconduct**

When a faculty member suspects that a violation of the academic honesty policy has occurred, they will meet with the student to: a) discuss the alleged act; b) hear any defense the student may have; c) discuss any proposed academic sanctions; d) inform the student of their right to appeal faculty-imposed sanctions to the department chair and/or dean of the college. Academic sanctions that may be imposed by the faculty member include a) a verbal reprimand; b) a written



reprimand; c) requiring the student to redo/resubmit the assignment, test, or project; d) lowering the grade for the assignment, test, or project.

The above list is for illustration only. It should not be construed as restrictive or as an exhaustive enumeration of the various sanctions that may be imposed by instructors for violations of the academic honesty policy. Academic sanctions that require a formal charge will be filed with the Associate Provost for Academic Administration include a) any sanction in excess of lowering the grade for an assignment, test, or project; b) failing the student for the course; c) recommending temporary or permanent suspension from the academic major or University.

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

When an instance of academic dishonesty is alleged, the issue should be resolved on an informal basis between the student and faculty member. If an informal resolution cannot be achieved, a formal process of deciding culpability and assessing sanctions will be followed. If the student has committed a previous violation, the formal process must be followed.

A faculty member who obtains information that a student has been dishonest should act promptly to resolve the issue. The faculty member should first contact the dean of students to determine if this is the first violation for the student. If the suspected incident is not the first violation, the offense must be handled through the formal resolution process. For a first violation, the faculty member may attempt to resolve the issue informally with the maximum penalty to be a grade of F in the course. If the faculty member feels the offense warrants a more severe penalty, the matter must be resolved through the formal process. For the matter to be resolved informally, the faculty member must meet with the student and present any evidence of a violation. The student will be given an opportunity to provide an explanation after hearing the evidence. If the faculty member determines a violation has occurred, they will complete the Settlement of a Charge of Academic Dishonesty form. This form will include the penalty the faculty member will apply. The form is then given to the student, who has 72 hours to seek advice and decide whether to sign. If the student agrees to accept the penalty, they must sign in the presence of the faculty member. The faculty member will then implement the accepted penalty and forward the settlement form to the dean of students. The form will be kept on record for five years and may be used if the student is accused of another academic dishonesty offense or any other violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The information will only be used for internal purposes and will not be disclosed outside the university. If the student refuses to sign, the faculty member may pursue the matter through the formal resolution process.

An allegation of academic dishonesty must be resolved through a formal process if the student disputes the charges or does not accept the penalty proposed by the faculty member. The formal process must also be followed if the incident is not the student's first violation. In the formal process, an allegation of academic dishonesty will be treated as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct. The charges will be resolved through the judicial process administered by the Dean of Students. The faculty member initiates a written complaint by providing details of the incident to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students and an academic administrator designated by the provost will consult to determine if sufficient information is present to warrant further action. If there is sufficient information to proceed with the complaint, the steps outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Process section of the student handbook, *Swataney*, will be

followed. Academic dishonesty cases must be heard by the university judicial hearing board; the judicial officer option is not available for these cases. Appeals of academic dishonesty decisions will be handled by the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost.

## **Penalties**

The Student Code of Conduct contains a list of sanctions that may be imposed for violations. In addition to those in the Code of Conduct, the following two sanctions may be imposed against students found to have committed acts of academic dishonesty: (a) grade Reduction, i.e., the grade for a particular unit of work or for the entire course may be reduced; and (b) imposition of a Failing (F) grade, i.e., the student may receive an F grade for the course.

These two penalties may be imposed through the informal settlement process or the formal hearing process. More severe penalties, including suspension or expulsion, may only be imposed through the formal process. Additional stipulations may also be attached to any sanctions. In the event a student has withdrawn from a course prior to a final settlement, the withdrawal will be reversed, and the penalty will be imposed.

## **Professional Performance Criteria**

### **Professional Performance**

#### Millersville University Professional Policy

Social workers and social work students at every level are guided by high standards of professionalism and the NASW Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics can be found on the [NASW website](#) in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Furthermore, students are expected to diligently aspire towards adequate or above achievement of all the competencies outlined by CSWE EPAS (2022). Achievement of the competencies is the foundation for the evaluation of students' academic progress and professional development. The behaviors that students manifest in their course of studies as part of their academic outcomes consist of the four following dimensions: *Knowledge, Values, Skills, and Cognitive and Affective Processes*. When students' behaviors are counter to the NASW Code of Ethics and are not in line with the expected core competencies and behaviors, faculty will implement informal, proactive strategies to resolve problems. When proactive strategies are ineffective, formal processes (described below) may be used.

### **Professional Values and Behaviors**

Behaviors that violate professional values and behaviors addressed by the NASW Code of Ethics and the core competencies and which have been fully documented by the professor(s) may be addressed through recommendations for Professional Development Plans (PDP) or a recommendation for termination from the program. Examples of behaviors that interfere with performance expectations and that may be grounds for dismissal from the program include, but are not limited to:

- Non-achievement or less than satisfactory achievement of MSW Student Contract goals in the field internship.
- Behaviors that violate the NASW Code of Ethics in the classroom, field agency, University, or in the community.
- Behaviors that conflict with the professional values and professional role sets of the social work

professional.

- Disruptive behaviors constituting a threat to the safety of the student or others.
- A pattern of unwillingness to participate in the learning activities of the program.
- Inability to communicate effectively, orally or in written form, such that performance is seriously impaired.

### **Professional Performance Policies**

The MU-SU MSW Program reserves the right to dismiss students for failure to maintain professional standards as outlined above.

- *Probation.* A student may be placed on probation until such time as the concern about professional behavior has been eliminated or the student is dismissed.
- *Dismissal.* The MU-SU MSW Program reserves the right to dismiss students for failure to maintain professional standards. Depending on the seriousness of the professional concerns, the student may be immediately dismissed, without a Professional Development Plan process.

If a faculty member or school partner identifies a concern, they should first address the concern with the student. If informal strategies are not effective, faculty should discuss those concerns with the Program Director on their campus and/or the Department Chair (the Chair of the student's home campus is consulted) to determine if a meeting with the student is warranted.

If a meeting is warranted, the Program Director will call a meeting to include relevant faculty (e.g., teaching faculty, advisor, field supervisor, field director).

- Prior to the meeting, students must be notified of the purpose of the meeting and the nature of the concerns as well as possible outcomes.
- The purpose of the meeting is for the student's professional improvement; however, failure to be successful with any decisions implemented may have consequences for how the student will continue in the social work program.
- Students have the right to have advocates present at this meeting and bring forth any evidence. Further, students have the right to appeal the outcome. See below for the appeal process.

If a PDP is developed, it must specify current concerns, goals, and potential consequences for failure to improve. Point-in-time re-evaluation must be scheduled, and the plan must include an articulation of students' rights to appeal in case of failure to meet goals of plan.

- The plan must have a place for the Department Chair to sign as well as other relevant faculty members.
- In addition to signing the plan, the student must sign a statement acknowledging they have been informed of their rights.

### **Evaluation of Professional Development Plan**

As outlined in the PDP, the individuals involved in the development of the PDP will assess whether the student was successful at meeting the goals. The positive and negative consequences of the evaluation will be put in writing and articulated to the student as will the student's right to appeal. Each individual, including the student, involved in the

evaluation process will sign the document.

### **Appeals Process**

Since professional development is part of academic progress, the University specific policy on students' grade appeals process will be utilized. For more information, please refer to the section on the *Grade Appeals Process*.

### **Readmission**

Readmission following dismissal for not meeting professional performance standards is rarely granted. It *may* be granted if the student presents compelling evidence of some fundamental change which would demonstrate the ability and willingness to maintain professional standards. To apply for readmission, you must also submit the appropriate application form with the regular application fee.

### **Student Rights and Responsibilities**

Students' rights and responsibilities are outlined in the official catalogs of the MU and SU graduate schools and in the Student Code of Conduct. Students enrolled at MU are guided by MU policies, and students enrolled at SU are guided by SU policies. **Students will find their relevant information in the following links:**

#### **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

- [Millersville University College of Graduate Studies and Adult Learning](#)
- [Millersville University Student Code of Conduct](#)

#### **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

- [Shippensburg University Graduate Catalogue](#)
- [Shippensburg University Student Code and Conduct Process](#)

### **Students with Disabilities and Learning Accommodations**

Our program is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. We welcome all students with disabilities into all of our educational programs and strive to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. Millersville University students may contact the Office of Learning Services which is located at 352 Lyle Hall and can be reached by phone at 717-871-5554 or via email at [LearningServices@millersville.edu](mailto:LearningServices@millersville.edu). Any Shippensburg University student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Accessibility Resources (OAR) to discuss specific needs. OAR is located in Mowery Hall 252 and can be reached by phone at (717) 477-1364 or via email at [oar@ship.edu](mailto:oar@ship.edu).

### **Policy on Reporting Sexual Violence (Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972)**

Millersville University and Shippensburg University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to meet this commitment, comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681, et seq., and act in accordance with guidance from the Office for Civil Rights, the University requires faculty members to report to the University's Title IX Coordinator incidents of sexual violence shared

by students. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a university-approved research project. Faculty members are obligated to report to the person designated in the University Protection of Minors policy incidents of sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred.

Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence, and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence, is available here for [MU students](#) and [SU students](#).

### **Sharing of Information**

Due to the collaborative nature of the MU-SU MSW program, the two universities share student information in a variety of ways in order to carry out the business of the program:

- MU-SU MSW faculty serve jointly on the admissions committee and have access to the records of students applying to the program.
- MU-SU MSW faculty jointly review, as needed, the academic progress of students.
- When students enroll in a course taught by a professor on the other campus, the home campus technology staff transfer identifying information about the students, including the name of the student; email address; and university ID numbers, to the other campus in order to enroll the students in the LMS system at the university of the professor teaching the course.
- When the professor submits grades for students, the professor gives the names of the students and the grades to the Registrar at the professor's home university. The Registrar sends the names and grades to the Registrar at the student's home campus, and the Registrar posts the grades to the student's official transcripts.

Students are responsible for knowing program requirements and following established procedures; programs are responsible for making program and course requirements clear. Students have the right to appropriate instruction and advisement and the responsibility to contribute to an environment that maximizes learning and professional development.

### **Student Participation in Program Governance**

Students participate in program governance through representation in MU-SU MSW committees. At Millersville University, graduate student representatives are invited to attend the School of Social Work committees through invitations posted in the department and via e-mails. At Shippensburg University, students are invited through invitations via emails. Students may also participate in the governance of their universities through opportunities described in the graduate catalogs.

Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in the formation and modification of policies affecting academic and student affairs both at their universities and in the MU-SU MSW program. Two of the primary vehicles to do this are the university-wide graduate faculty and student organizations on their respective campuses and department-level student organizations.

## **MILLERSVILLE UNIVERSITY**

Students participate in the interviewing process for all new faculty searches, and all are invited to be present at visits by Commissioners and Site Team visitors as part of the Program's accreditation process. Students also meet with Program Reviewers as part of required PASSHE Five Year Program Reviews. Student feedback, solicited through surveys and focus group discussions, and unsolicited through emails and conversations is essential to the development of program policies, procedures, and curriculum.

MSW students at Millersville are encouraged to join the [Graduate Student Organization](#).

“The mission of the graduate student organization at Millersville University is to promote an exchange of ideas among graduate students and with faculty and administration. The primary responsibilities of the GSO are to provide guidance and assistance for graduate students, to promote opportunities for student-faculty interaction, and to provide a forum for the expression of graduate students' needs and concerns.”

At Millersville University, MSW students are encouraged to join the Alliance for Social Change (ASC), the student-led organization. The ASC is open to all social work students and is assisted by a faculty advisor.

## **SHIPPENSBURG UNIVERSITY**

The Shippensburg University students have created the MSW Student Organization, which is led by a team of students who volunteer for the leadership of the organization and are supported by assigned faculty from the department. The MSW Student Organization creates and facilitates support groups for students, organizes networking activities with alumni, and helps with the organization of the graduation reception.

At Shippensburg University, policy requires that each department have a graduate grade appeal committee. This committee is made up of students and faculty who review grade appeals and make recommendations to the administration. Three students and three faculty constitute the committee.

Students participate in the interviewing process for all new faculty searches, and all are invited to be present at visits by Commissioners and Site Team visitors as part of the program's accreditation process. Students also meet with Program Reviewers as part of required PASSHE Five Year Program Reviews. Student feedback solicited through surveys and focus group discussions and unsolicited through emails and conversations is essential to the development of program policies, procedures, and curriculum.

At SU, the [Graduate Student Association Board](#) has been organized to promote harmonious relationships among graduate students, faculty, and administration; to provide a means of expressing to the university as a whole the needs of graduate students, and to ensure the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of graduate students. Membership is automatic during the semester or session in which the graduate student is enrolled, and all are invited to attend the monthly meetings. Officers and members of the GSAB sit on a variety of the University shared governance committees.

## **SECTION V: ORIENTATION AND ADVISING**

The MU-SU MSW program has academic and professional advising policies and procedures that are consistent with our program goals and objectives. All advising is provided by full-time social work program faculty. Advising takes on varied formats depending on the time frame and needs of the students.

### **Preadmission Advisement**

The Program Directors and MSW academic advisors are available to meet with students who are seeking information about the program. They may play a role in helping potential applicants determine if their personal goals are in alignment with the program goals. They may also discuss how the program structure may accommodate the scheduling needs of the potential students.

### **Orientation**

Prior to the start of classes during the summer, the MU-SU MSW faculty provides an orientation to the program and the course delivery model. Orientation is mandatory for students.

### **Academic and Professional Advisement**

#### MSW Professionalism and Advisement Policy

When students are accepted into the program, the Program Director, in consultation with Department Chair assigns academic advisers, who are MSW faculty. Once students are enrolled in the program, they can request a different academic adviser if they believe a different faculty member is a more appropriate match for them. Academic advisors meet with students about their academic concerns and their professional career goals on an as needed basis. Students may request a meeting with their advisor at any time.

Upon admission to the program, students may meet with their advisors to develop an academic plan. Students receive this information through a Degree Audit Review that students are able to access from their portals. Advisors may communicate via group meetings or e-mails on a regular basis as program changes or scheduling matters arise. Students are encouraged to meet individually with their advisor at least once per semester and more if necessary.

Students experiencing academic difficulties are strongly encouraged to reach out for support. If students are experiencing academic difficulties, the advisor develops a remedial plan with the students and links them with the many resources provided on their campus, such as counseling, tutoring, medical, and disabilities services.

## SECTION VI: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Licensure

Licensure is a state-regulated activity. In Pennsylvania, social work licensure is awarded by the Pennsylvania [state licensing board of social workers, marriage and family therapists, and professional counselors](#). Board announcements, [laws and regulations](#), general information, and [online licensing services](#) are all found online.

Students may apply for a license through the electronic PALS system or submit a paper application. Students may take the licensure examination through the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) during the semester of graduation or any time after graduation. If students wish to take the exam during their last semester, they must provide the program director on their home campus with the social work license application titled: “Verification of Social Work Education for Applicants Enrolled in Their Final Semester” by the date specified by the coordinator. This form is the last page in the paper application which can be found on the board website. The top part of the form is to be completed by the applicants. The rest of the form is completed by the University and sent directly to the Licensing Board. Failure to submit forms in a timely manner will result in significant delays in students’ ability to sit for the exam.

Students who seek licensure from another state may find the requirements for their state [here](#). States vary not only in terms of licensure procedures and license exam content but may require specific courses and field experiences as part of the licensing process, as well. It is students’ responsibility to become familiar with the policies that guide the social work profession in the state where they hope to be licensed.

**Please note:** Once a student has graduated, the student completes this process without involvement from the universities.

### University Student Services

In addition to the MU-SU MSW program and its opportunities, students in the program are eligible for the services, opportunities, and protections for all graduate students at their respective universities. These services, opportunities, and protections are outlined in the Graduate Student Catalogs found at [Shippensburg University](#) and [Millersville University](#). Shippensburg University students will find updated information on various services in the MSW Program Shell on D2L Brightspace.



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