

## **Student Professional Conduct and Professional Standards**

Social Work education is preparation for professional practice and as such there are expectations that go beyond academic standards within a classroom. There are physical, cognitive, emotional, and character requirements for effective social work practice, in addition to compliance with social work state licensing laws and ethics. Students who violate or fail to demonstrate adherence to these essential skills, values, and standards as they progress through the social work program and their field practicum may be subject to dismissal from the social work program and may be unable to secure a social work license and/or job upon graduation.

Students are evaluated on these professional standards in all areas of the BSW and MSW program including admissions, academic classes and field practicum. Students are expected to possess these attributes and skills at a level appropriate to their year in the program.

**Professionalism:** Students are expected to follow agency rules and policies. They are expected to be punctual and dependable. They are expected to demonstrate professional behavior in their interactions with clients, agency staff, and Boise State University faculty and staff. Students should provide services to clients that are based on relevant social work knowledge and research. Students must demonstrate an ability to prioritize responsibilities and complete assignments.

**Interpersonal:** Social work students demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients and other professionals. These include showing respect for and consideration of others, listening skills, and the ability to communicate effectively both verbally and non-verbally. Students take appropriate responsibility for their actions and consider the impact on others. They work effectively with others, regardless of level of authority. Students advocate in an appropriate, respectful and responsible manner taking into consideration the complexity of each situation. They use proper channels for complaints, conflict resolution, and grievances. Students demonstrate a willingness to receive feedback from faculty and field instructors, administrators, staff and colleagues in a positive and respectful manner.

**Communication Skills:** Social work students exercise professional judgment in all communications with students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals. Professional competence encompasses using email in an appropriate manner and responding to email communications from other students, faculty, staff, administrators, and field instructors in a timely and appropriate manner. Student must have the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing while demonstrating a grasp of professional language and concepts. This includes producing clear and legible casework and clinical notes in an appropriate format for setting and situation, organizing thoughts and ideas into appropriately written referenced essays

and research papers. Students should not audio or video tape any conversations with other students, faculty, field instructors or clients without first asking for prior permission to record any personal or professional conversations.

**Values:** Students must demonstrate a commitment to the core values of social work including service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence.

**Diversity:** Social work students must value diversity. Students must serve in an appropriate manner all persons seeking assistance in their agency regardless of race, color, religion, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, income, protected veteran status, genetic information, limited English proficiency, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

Students must not impose their own personal, religious, and/or cultural values on others and must know how their own background and value base affect his or her interactions with clients. Students must be willing to reflect on and change their behavior when it interferes with their ability to work with a client.

**Self-Awareness:** Social work students know how their own values, beliefs, attitudes, and past experiences affect their thinking, behaviors, relationships, and overall practice. Students examine their internal processes, their strengths, limitations, and suitability for professional practice. Social work students demonstrate an awareness of how others perceive them and are willing to change behaviors that are non-conducive to working relationships with clients or other professionals.

**Empathy:** Social workers endeavor to gain insight and understanding into the values, lived experiences, and beliefs that clients have. Social work students communicate empathy and support clients as a basis for building a productive and professional relationship with the client.

**Self-Care:** Social work students recognize the signs of stress and emotional problems, develop appropriate means of self-care, and seek supportive services when necessary to minimize any adverse impact on scholastic and professional performance. Students must be willing to seek the advice of their faculty advisor and follow recommendations made by their advisor and/or faculty decisions regarding the appropriate maintenance of their academic, physical, or psychological health, which may include assessment and/or therapeutic services.

**Ethical Behavior:** Students must abide by the ethical standards of the profession developed by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics can be found at: <https://www.socialworkers.org/about/ethics/code-of-ethics/code-of-ethics-english>.

**Privacy & Confidentiality:** Social work students should respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of clients. Students should not solicit private information from clients unless it is needed to provide services. Students are expected to comply with confidentiality requirements outlined in agency policy, applicable laws, and the NASW Code of Ethics and only disclose

client information in accordance with such policies and/or if disclosing information is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. Students should not disclose identifying information about clients in Seminar and other classes.

**Sexual Relationships & Physical Contact:** Students should not engage in physical contact (such as hugging or massaging clients) with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result. Students should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current or former clients – or with other individuals with whom clients maintain close personal relationships where there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Social work students, not their clients, assume the full burden of setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

**Motor Abilities:** Social work students need to have sufficient ability to participate in classes and field agency placement, and to acquire and integrate data and knowledge through use of their senses. Students need to be able to perform the essential functions of an internship with reasonable accommodations.

**Social Media Guidelines:** Social media channels, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, and various blog sites are just a few examples of new and exciting ways to connect with others and share information. Likewise, technology has broadened social workers' capacity to assess and manage information about clients, influence policy, address social justice issues, and receive supervision. However, the rapid growth of social media communication tools and their ease of accessibility can also have unintended and potentially damaging consequences to users if basic guidelines are ignored. **Students are expected to adhere to social work values, ethics and engage in professional conduct as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics when using social media communication tools, whether using a personal site(s), agency site(s), or University site(s).**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies and standards set out in the School of Social Work, Field Education Manual, and Student Professional Conduct and Professional Standards for Boise State's Bachelor or Master of Social Work programs so that I may remain in good standing with the BSW or MSW program.*

\_\_\_\_ I agree.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_