



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

School of Social Work | Okanagan Campus

# MSW Student Handbook

## 2021-2022



[socialwork.ok.ubc.ca](http://socialwork.ok.ubc.ca)

Canvas [M.S.W. Program Homepage](#)

Facebook: [UBC School of Social Work | Okanagan Campus](#)

## Acknowledgements

We respectfully acknowledge that we live and work in the unceded territory of the Syilx people here in the Okanagan Valley.

The School of Social Work at UBC's Okanagan Campus would also like to acknowledge the contribution of ideas, material and content in this Handbook from a large group of friends and colleagues in the social work field. In particular, we would like to thank the Florida Atlantic University for permission to draw from the content in their Handbooks. Their assistance has been instrumental in strengthening the content and form of this Handbook and we believe helps make our program stronger.

## About This Handbook

This MSW Student Handbook is intended to provide students with information regarding the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) program, including an overview of the program requirements and the School's policies and procedures. It is important that students also review the [Okanagan Academic Calendar](#) and be familiar with all University policies, dates and deadlines.

Additional information about policies and procedures specific to Field Education can be found in the Field Education Handbook. Students are expected to be familiar with both Handbooks and utilize these as appropriate.

The MSW Student Handbook is revised annually. A new edition becomes available in the spring of every year and comes into effect for the next academic year. Students looking for information in this Handbook must ensure they are using the version relevant to the academic year. The Handbook is available and easily accessible on the School of Social Work website and the [M.S.W. Program Homepage](#) on Canvas.

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## Welcome Message from the Director

Dear Students,

Welcome to the School of Social Work at UBCO! I am pleased to have you join us.

UBC consistently ranks among the top 3 universities in Canada<sup>1</sup> and the top 40 universities world-wide<sup>2</sup>. UBC Okanagan School of Social Work offers a clinical and direct practice M.S.W. program with two tracks: Advanced One-Year track for those with a social work degree and a Foundational Two-Year track for those with an undergraduate degree other than social work., There are over 55,000 social workers in Canada<sup>3</sup>, and labour market demand is strong for the profession<sup>4</sup>, across the country<sup>5</sup>.

Our M.S.W. program integrates critical, structural, and social-relational perspectives with clinical knowledge and expertise. Our graduates enter the job market with specialized knowledge as well as evidence-based expertise. Our program is fully accredited by the Canadian Association for Social Work Education (CASWE)<sup>6</sup>.

We are a faculty of dedicated instructors and scholars, who are committed to your professional and occupational success.

Welcome, to one of the country's finest Schools of Social Work.

**John Graham, PhD, RSW**  
Director, School of Social Work

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- 1 [http://www.webometrics.info/en/north\\_america/canada](http://www.webometrics.info/en/north_america/canada)
  - 2 <https://www.ubc.ca/about/our-place.html>
  - 3 According to the most recent data available from 2011:  
<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Rp-eng.cfm?LANG=E&APATH=3&DETAIL=0&DIM=0&FL=A&FREE=0&GC=0&GID=0&GK=0&GRP=0&PID=105897&PRID=0&PTYPE=105277&S=0&SHOWALL=1&SUB=0&Temporal=2013&THEME=96&VID=0&VNAMEE=&VNAMEFF>
  - 4 <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/careers/career-advice/i-want-to-be-a-social-worker-what-will-my-salary-be/article17782489/>
  - 5 <http://www.canadavisa.com/social-workers-4152.html>
  - 6 <https://caswe-acfts.ca/commission-on-accreditation/list-of-accredited-programs/>

## **ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AT UBCO**

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### **School's Directory**

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For complete Faculty and Staff Directory, visit the School's website  
<https://socialwork.ok.ubc.ca/contact/faculty-and-staff/>

## **Mission Statement**

The mission of the School of Social Work at UBC Okanagan is *to deliver quality graduate-level clinically focused social work education, and to produce high impact internationally recognized research, both intended to respond to the diverse needs of social work clients.*

## **Core Values**

We promote a culture of mutual accountability, integrity, ownership, and transparency (**Accountability**); We welcome diverse ways of understanding, knowing, teaching, and learning and take a respectful, scholarly approach to understanding the differences (**Appreciation for Different Perspectives**); We strive to empower clients through advancements in social work scholarship and education (**Empowerment**); We encourage all members of the School – students, staff, and faculty – to initiate action towards positive change, collaborate fully and constructively, and foster healthy supportive relationships among all groups (**Leadership and Healthy Relationships**); We treat all members of the School and its communities – students, staff, faculty, field educators, and community partners – with respect and dignity, regardless of their ability, age, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, political ideology, race, religion, sexual orientation, social condition, and all intersectionalities of life (**Respect for Human Diversity**); We pursue social justice, advocate for positive social change, and protect the human rights of individuals, families, and communities, in all aspects of our teaching, research, and service (**Social Justice**); We value purposeful productivity and are committed to enhancing and improving our research, teaching, and service (**Work Ethic**).

## **Expectations of Students**

When entering this professional Master's program, a transition takes place. Students enter a domain where all interactions with staff and faculty, Field Education personnel, and student peers become part of a professional space. Accordingly, our approach to social work graduate education is based on a model of adult education, in which students play a significant role in the process of their learning and growth. Students will be challenged to think differently, to question what they already know, and experience what they may not have anticipated, both in the classroom and in field education.

The unknowns associated with any type of social work practice, along with the responsibilities social workers carry for their clients' wellbeing, often make social work students feel anxious. To alleviate that anxiety and reduce the unknown, students often expect to be taught what to do with their clients. However, the knowledge and skills this program aims to provide cannot prepare students to every possible situation they will encounter. As with all clinically based MSW programs, we recognize that it is common and normal for students to feel under-prepared for their field education practicums. The School of Social Work hopes that students will trust its knowledge and experience, and utilize its guidance and support when taking as many opportunities as possible to step outside their comfort zone and embrace the unknown territory.

Furthermore, the School of Social Work encourages students to access clinical services for themselves, throughout the completion of their degree. The known benefits of

receiving clinical services include (1) enhanced self-care by working through personal challenges that may affect one's ability to support their clients, and (2) enhanced understanding of social work clients' experiences by putting one's self in the service users/clients' shoes.

Students, faculty, and staff are expected to conduct themselves according to professional practice standards. In order to do so, every individual must become familiar with the relevant codes of ethics (BCASW, BCCSW and CASW). By committing to these codes and principles, students will have a guiding framework for most situations they will experience, both in the field and in the program. The School also expects all students, faculty, and staff to become familiar and conduct themselves in accordance with the [UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff](#) at all times, on and off campus; in the classrooms, field education practicums, and the community.

Graduate students are expected to be independent and self-directed. As such, MSW students are expected to utilize this Student Handbook, the Field Education Handbook, Course Syllabi, and various UBCO webpages included in this Student Handbook (e.g., Okanagan Academic Calendar, College of Graduate Studies, School of Social Work website) to locate information. If students cannot find information on these available resources, they are welcome to email program-related inquiries to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca), field-related inquiries to [ask.field@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.field@ubc.ca), and any course-specific inquiries directly to the course instructor.

## **THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW) PROGRAM**

The School of Social Work at UBCO offers a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree that is accredited by the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE). The program provides advanced education and training so students can graduate job-ready for professional leadership roles in clinical and direct-practice organizations. Our graduates are eligible to apply for full registration/licensing with the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW) and similar regulatory bodies nationally and North America-wide.

While promoting a professional social work identity, the Master of Social Work program at the University of British Columbia Okanagan (UBCO) is proudly a program of study with a focus on clinical social work.

### **Clinical Social Work at UBCO**

At the UBCO School of Social Work, “clinical social work” refers to the application of various theories of human behaviour and contextual understanding of social environment to conceptualize clients’ difficulties, while integrating dynamic effects of discrimination, economic hardships and additional oppressive structural forces on individual lives. Utilizing multi-dimensional clinical assessments, clinical social work aims to restore, maintain and enhance physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Additional focus expands to include improving the overall human condition through positive structural changes and enhancing diversity and equality at a micro, mezzo and macro scale.

A clinical social worker at UBCO is trained to conduct individual, family, couple and environmental assessments, diagnose or understand human and ecological problems, identify effective therapies, counseling techniques, advocacy, or environmental interventions, and collaboratively with the client employ evidence-based psychological or environmental methods for resolving bio-psycho-social difficulties.

Rooted in a longstanding commitment to social justice, clinical social workers utilize practice knowledge to inform social policy, research, advocacy, and social action. Informed by theory and available evidence-based practice, clinical social workers emphasize the centrality of helping relationships, tailoring their interventions to the unique needs of each client whilst abiding to the social work code of ethics and the policies of the British Columbia College of Social Workers (BCCSW), and like regulatory bodies nationally and North America-wide: to which graduates of our clinical program are eligible to apply for full registration/licensing.

### **Program Objectives**

The MSW courses and field education aim to:

1. facilitate and enhance students’ social work identity
2. facilitate students’ theoretical understanding of the dynamic interaction between individuals and their social environments

3. advance students' knowledge and skills to critically analyze personal problems from social and psychological perspectives in clinical practice
4. teach advanced skills of engagement, assessment, formulation, planning and intervention, and evaluation
5. enhance students' knowledge and skills for reflexive and reflective clinical practice
6. enhance students' knowledge and skills for clinical decision-making based on ethical principles
7. enhance students' knowledge and skills in the use of evidence to inform clinical practice
8. develop students' knowledge and skills to integrate inter-sectionailities of ability, age, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, Indigeneity, power, religion, race, sexual orientation, social condition, among other positionalities, in clinical social work practice
9. develop students' advocacy and leadership skills in facilitating organizational, policy, and community-level change
10. enhance students' knowledge and skills to work with positional differences in clinical practice

## **Program Tracks**

The School of Social Work at UBCO offers two tracks of the MSW program:

- (1) Foundational (FDN) Two-Year track (60 credits), designed for students who hold an undergraduate degree other than a BSW. Students spend the first year building foundational knowledge, and their second year advancing their clinical social work skills.
- (2) Advanced (ADV) One-Year track (30 credits), designed for students who currently hold an approved social work degree and who wish to advance their theoretical understanding and practice skills.

## **Program Requirements**

<b>Foundational-Track (FDN) Year 1 Core Courses (30 credits)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SOCW 511 Introduction to Social Work Theory and Practice (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 512 Theories and Interventions for Clinical Social Work (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 513 Assessment Skills for Clinical Social Work (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 514 Diversity and Critical Reflexive Practice (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 515 Social Welfare Policy in Canada (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 517 Social Work and Indigenous Peoples and Canada (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 518 Integrative Seminar for Field Education (3 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 519 Social Work Field Education I (450-hours; 6 credits)</li> <li>• SOCW 525 Human Development for Clinical Social Work (3 credits)</li> </ul>

## **Advanced-Track (ADV) / Foundational-Track (FDN) Year 2 Core Courses (21 credits)**

- SOCW 551 Advanced Clinical Social Work Theory and Practice (3 credits)
- SOCW 553 Research Knowledge and Evidence in Clinical Social Work (3 credits)
- SOCW 554 Mental Health and Mental Illness (3 credits)
- SOCW 555 Organizations and Leadership (3 credits)
- SOCW 558 Advanced Integrative Seminar (3 credits)
- SOCW 559 Field Education II (450 hours; 6 credits)

## **Electives (9 credits)**

- 3 approved electives (more information can be found in the [Electives](#) section below)

### **Field Education Streams**

Every MSW student is assigned to a Field Education Stream, which then dictates the student's academic plan of the following year (see Stream-Based Annual Academic Plans section next). The assignment to Streams is done every year by the end of June for the following academic year (e.g., in June 2021 for the 2021-2022 academic year).

Students in the first year of the two-year Foundational Track are assigned to one of three (3) Field Education practicum streams:

- (1) Winter Local (January-April)
- (2) Summer Local (May-August)
- (3) Two-Year Social Work Mental Health Clinic (16-month, Jan of Year 1 until Apr of Year 2)

Students in the second year of the two-year Foundational Track OR the one-year Advanced Track are assigned to one of five (5) Field Education practicum streams:

- (1) Winter Local (January-April)
- (2) Winter Two-Term Local (September-April)
- (3) Winter Distance (January-April) \*\*\*NEW
- (4) Summer Local (May-August)
- (5) Summer Distance (May-August)

More information about these streams and the assignment process can be found in the MSW Field Education Handbook (p.10-13).

Note: Students completing the thesis-based option of the MSW are still assigned to an annual field education stream. Therefore, their academic plan is dictated *both* by their field education stream and the course requirements associated with the thesis-based option. More information about the thesis-based option can be found in the [Course-Based vs Thesis-Based Option](#) section.

## **Stream-Based Annual Academic Plans**

The following one-year academic plans<sup>1</sup> include the core courses required of students in each academic term, based on the Field Education Stream they are assigned to, as well as comments about how many electives are permitted in each term (*italicized*).

In addition, each academic plan includes “SOCW 519/559-Lecture” which represents the Pre-Practicum Preparation sessions students are required to attend in the academic term prior to their practicum. More details about the Pre-Practicum Preparation sessions can be found in the Field Education Handbook on pages 19-20. Taken together, the courses listed in each term of the following academic plans represent students’ maximal course load.

Note: With the exception of SOCW 518, 519, 558, and 559, all summer courses are scheduled as condensed courses (i.e., anywhere from 1 week to 8 weeks in length). Specific details about the schedule of each summer course is provided to students prior to their summer course registration.

### *Foundational (FDN) Year 1 Academic Plans (by Streams)*

#### **(1) FDN Year 1 Winter Local Stream (January-April)**

<b>Winter Term 1</b>	<b>Winter Term 2</b>	<b>Summer Terms (May-Aug)</b>
<b>SOCW 511</b> (condensed in Sept-Oct) <b>SOCW 512</b> <b>SOCW 513</b> <b>SOCW 514</b> <b>SOCW 519- Lecture</b>  * No electives permitted	<b>SOCW 517</b> <b>SOCW 518</b> <b>SOCW 519</b> (practicum)  * No electives permitted	<b>SOCW 525</b> <b>SOCW 515</b>  * May take up to 2 electives

#### **(2) FDN Year 1 Summer Local Stream (May-August)**

<b>Winter Term 1</b>	<b>Winter Term 2</b>	<b>Summer Terms (May-Aug)</b>
<b>SOCW 511</b> (condensed in Sept-Oct) <b>SOCW 512</b> <b>SOCW 513</b> <b>SOCW 514</b>  * No electives permitted	<b>SOCW 515</b> <b>SOCW 517</b> <b>SOCW 519- Lecture</b>  * May take up to 2 electives	<b>SOCW 525</b> <b>SOCW 518</b> <b>SOCW 519</b> (practicum)  * No electives permitted

<sup>1</sup> All academic plans are for one year, EXCEPT for the Social Work Clinic Stream course schedule which is for two years.

**(3) FDN Year 1-2 Social Work Clinic Stream (January of Year 1 – April of Year 2)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>Year 1</b>		
<b>SOCW 511</b> (condensed in Sept-Oct) <b>SOCW 512</b> <b>SOCW 513</b> <b>SOCW 514</b> <b>SOCW 519-Lecture</b>  * No electives permitted	<b>SOCW 517</b> <b>SOCW 515</b> <b>SOCW 519</b> (clinic practicum starts)  * May take up to 1 elective	<b>SOCW 525</b> <b>SOCW 518</b> <b>SOCW 519</b> (clinic practicum continues)  * May take up to 1 elective
<b>Year 2</b>		
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 554</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b> (clinic practicum continues)  * No electives permitted	<b>SOCW 555</b> <b>SOCW 558</b> <b>SOCW 559</b> (clinic practicum continues)  * May take up to 1 elective	* Complete any remaining electives to complete all program requirements

*Advanced (ADV) or Foundational (FDN) Year 2 Academic Plans (by Streams)*

**(1) ADV/FDN Year 2 Winter Local Stream (January-April)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 554</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b>  * May take up to 1 elective	<b>SOCW 555</b> <b>SOCW 558</b> <b>SOCW 559</b> (practicum)  * No Electives permitted	* Complete any remaining electives to complete all program requirements

**(2) ADV/FDN Year 2 Winter Two-Term Local Stream (September-April)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 554</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b> (practicum starts)  * No Electives permitted	<b>SOCW 555</b> <b>SOCW 558</b> <b>SOCW 559</b> (practicum continues)  * May take up to 1 elective	* Complete any remaining electives to complete all program requirements

*Note:* Students completing their practicum at Foundry are required to take SOCW 540H during Winter Term 1. More details can be found on p. 16.

**(3) ADV/FDN Year 2 Winter Distance Stream (January-April)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 554</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b>  * May take up to 1 elective	<b>SOCW 555 (online)</b> <b>SOCW 558 (online)</b> <b>SOCW 559 (practicum)</b>  * No Electives permitted	* Complete any remaining electives online to complete all program requirements

Note: Advanced Track students interested in this Stream are strongly advised to review the list of online electives offered in the summer (available on the Program's Canvas page), to ensure they have an appropriate plan to complete the three electives from distance by the end of the year.

**(4) ADV/FDN Year 2 Summer Local Stream (May-August)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 554</b>  * May take up to 2 elective	<b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 555</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b>  * May take up to 2 electives	<b>SOCW 558</b> <b>SOCW 559 (practicum)</b>  * May take up to 1 elective

**(5) ADV/FDN Year 2 Summer Distance Stream (May-August)**

Winter Term 1	Winter Term 2	Summer Terms (May-Aug)
<b>SOCW 551</b> <b>SOCW 554</b>  * May take up to 2 elective	<b>SOCW 553</b> <b>SOCW 555</b> <b>SOCW 559-Lecture</b>  * May take up to 2 electives	<b>SOCW 558 (online)</b> <b>SOCW 559 (practicum)</b>  * May take up to 1 elective

*Changes to Academic Plans*

Significant changes to a student's stream-based academic plan are not allowed, with the exception of situations that require academic concessions or accommodations, as per [UBC Campus-Wide Policies and Regulations](#). Students must be aware that core MSW courses are typically offered once a year so removing a core course from a student's academic plan will, in most cases, require a one-year delay in completing the program.

Students wishing to request minor changes to their academic plans (e.g., adding a course, or taking a course in a different term than indicated in their assigned academic

plan) must submit the “Request for Exception to Course Schedule” form (available on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas, under Resources) **as early as possible**. Such requests are assessed by the MSW Program Coordinator on an individual basis.

Requests to add courses beyond the recommended course load while completing a practicum are reviewed jointly by the MSW Program Coordinator and the Field Office. **To ensure student learning and success, such request are rarely approved.** These requests are carefully reviewed against a number of factors, including but not limited to:

- the rationale behind the request,
- the student’s academic performance in the program so far,
- the student previous practice experiences and level of preparation for field,
- existing evidence of the student capacity to handle higher-than-recommended workload,
- the nature of the student’s practicum, including its scheduling flexibility (i.e., ability to accommodate any scheduled class time that may conflict with practicum hours), and
- the nature of the existing relationship between the School and the practicum agency

In some cases, the Program Coordinator will reach out to the student to set up a meeting to discuss the request. Students are notified of the Program Coordinator’s decision via email.

#### *Foundry Practicum and Related Course Requirements*

As described in the Field Education Handbook, our School has a strong and collaborative relationship with Foundry BC. Students assigned to complete their practicum in a Foundry location (e.g., Kelowna or Penticton) are required to take SOCW 540H: *Interventions with Individuals and Families*, as one of their electives. This course was originally developed to ensure students had the foundational knowledge required to be effective in a Foundry practicum. It is taught in collaboration between a Social Work faculty and staff from Foundry BC, and typically involves a one-day training on Solution-Focused Brief Therapy which is the method of practice at all Foundry locations. SOCW 540H counts as one of the three required electives towards completing the degree requirements.

#### **Integrative Seminars (SOCW 518 and SOCW 558)**

Students are required to take an Integrative Seminar while in practicum (i.e., SOCW 518 while in SOCW 519 and SOCW 558 while in SOCW 559)<sup>2</sup>. The Integrative Seminars help students integrate theoretical knowledge and practice experiences. In these seminars, students learn by sharing their experiences and listening to other students’ experiences, both through the online discussions and in-class participation. Therefore, attendance and participation make up a significant component of the course requirements. Details about the online Integrative seminar are included below.

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<sup>2</sup> Students in a two-term practicum take the Integrative Seminar in the second academic term of their practicum (See course schedule for each field education stream)

Integrative Seminars are scheduled on Fridays to allow students to complete their practicum hours Monday-Thursday. The Integrative Seminars are hybrid courses, meaning they require bi-weekly in-class seminar activities (e.g., lectures, class discussions, student presentations, and guest speakers), and online activities (e.g., readings, videos, tutorials, and reflective online discussions). The Integrative Seminar courses are graded as Pass/Fail. It is important to review the course syllabi for specific description of what constitutes a Pass/Fail grade and further details on each course schedule.

#### *Online Integrative Seminar for Distance Practicums*

Students in distance practicums will take the Integrative Seminar as a fully online course, which typically requires scheduled synchronous class times (during which all students and the instructor participate online), and asynchronous learning activities (i.e., students complete independently at different times). Scheduled synchronous class time is typically set for Fridays. Students can find the final scheduling details of the course on the Student Service Center.

### **Electives**

As part of the program requirements, students must complete three 3-credit elective courses. Students can fulfill the elective requirement by taking approved elective courses, completing a graduating paper, and/or completing directed-studies (DS) courses.

#### *Pre-Approved Elective Courses*

As described in the [Okanagan Academic Calendar](#), pre-approved elective courses include 500-level courses offered by the School of Social Work, Okanagan Campus (SOCW) and Health-Interprofessional (HINT).

#### **SOCW Electives**

Each year the School offers a number of SOCW electives taught by our faculty or adjunct instructors, based on their expertise in a particular area of practice (see School of Social Work website for information about our Faculty and Adjuncts). Elective courses can be found on the [Academic Calendar](#)<sup>3</sup> (any course number that is not included in the above list of core courses is considered an elective course). However, students should note that **not all elective courses on the Academic Calendar are offered every year**. The list of elective courses offered in the next academic year is determined in February. Students are provided with that list via the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas once the information is confirmed.

The School is committed to offering elective courses that meet the interests of MSW students, given the availability of resources and instructor expertise. To this end, students are given an opportunity to inform the School of their topics of

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<sup>3</sup> SOCW 540, Selected Topics in Social Work Practice, is used to represent new or rarely offered elective courses. Therefore, descriptions for these courses are not available on the Academic Calendar.

interests by completing an annual Elective Survey. The data then help guide the planning the elective offerings in the following academic year.

### **HINT Electives**

HINT courses are offered by the Faculty of Health and Social Development and encourage effective interprofessional collaboration and understanding among students of health and human service programs, and between the external community and the University. Some HINT courses are taught by Social Work faculty while other courses may be taught by either Nursing faculty or Health and Exercise Studies faculty. HINT courses typically have a number of seats reserved for MSW students.

#### *Directed Studies (SOCW 541; 3 credits)*

A Directed Studies in Social Work is a learning experience in a focused area of study, with the agreement and under supervision of a faculty member selected by the student. Directed Studies are typically used when a student wishes to advance their knowledge on a particular topic which is not covered in an offered core or elective course. At times, a Directed Studies course can be used to develop foundational knowledge on a topic to help frame and enhance student's knowledge prior to the completion of a MSW thesis.

SOCW 541 is typically scheduled as a one-term course, is expected to be completed within this timeframe, and is graded on a percentage scale. Therefore, the student's final percentage grade for the course is due by the end of the examination period of the term in which it is completed.

The creation of a Directed Studies course can be a lengthy process. It requires the development of an individualized course syllabus, which clearly outlines the description of the course, the expected learning outcomes, the evaluation criteria and other expectations of the students, an initial list of required readings, and a course schedule, all of which are determined collaboratively between the instructor and the student.

The proposed syllabus must be submitted for review **eight (8) weeks prior to the beginning of the term** in which the students wishes to take the course. Every submitted syllabus is reviewed by the Program Coordinator and one additional member of the Curriculum Committee of the School. Once approved, the Program Administrator registers the student in the course.

To take a Directed Studies course, a student must follow the following steps:

1. Identify a faculty member and approach them to ensure the faculty member is willing to create this individualized course with the student.
2. **In collaboration with the instructor**, create a course syllabus using the MSW Course Syllabus Template (available to all MSW instructors) Please develop this course syllabus in advance of the eight weeks prior to the start of the term.
3. Complete the "Request for Exception to MSW Course Schedule" form *at least eight weeks prior to the course beginning*. This form is available on the MSW

Program Homepage on Canvas, under the Resources tab. Students are asked to attach the proposed course syllabus to this form upon completion. Upon review, the Program Coordinator may reach out to the course instructor to collect additional information about the course, and may ask for changes to be made to the course syllabus as a condition to approving the request. If changes are needed, both the student and the course instructor will be contacted.

4. Once approved, the Graduate Program Administrator will process the request and register the student in the appropriate section of SOCW 541. The student and instructor will be notified via email of the decision.

Students are welcome to consult with the Program Coordinator prior to taking the steps listed above.

*Graduating Paper (SOCW 598; 3 credits)*

A Graduating Paper in Social Work is a scholarly paper in an area of interest that conforms to the demands of a peer-reviewed social work journal. Typically, the graduating paper is approximately 20 pages in length and conform to the specific guidelines of the selected journal. Students must work with a faculty as their graduate paper supervisor. They are often encouraged by their graduate paper supervisor to submit their paper to the selected journal. SOCW 598 may be scheduled as a one- or two-term course, so students should complete it within 8 months.

A student may engage in a graduating paper:

- to deepen the student's understanding of a particular theoretical or practice issue,
- to potentially make a contribution to the social work literature,
- to demonstrate mastery of a particular content area, and
- to utilize an opportunity to develop skills in writing for publication.

A Graduating Paper is graded as Pass or Fail. Unlike SOCW 541 (Directed Studies), the Instructor on Record for all SOCW 598 (Graduating Papers) is the Program Coordinator. Therefore, the faculty member who supports their learning is considered the student's Graduating Paper Supervisor. The Supervisor is often an expert in the area of concentration of the paper. The Supervisor provides guidance and counsel on the subject, and approves the final draft of the paper. Once approved, the Supervisor submits their grade recommendation (Pass/Fail) to the Program Coordinator using the "SOCW 598 Completion Form" via email ([ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca)), and upon their review of the submission, the Program Coordinator enters the appropriate final grade.

As with a Directed Studies course, the creation of a Graduating Paper course can be a lengthy process. It requires the development of an individualized course syllabus, which clearly outlines the description of the course, the expected learning outcomes, the evaluation criteria and other expectations of the students, an initial list of required readings, and a timeline/schedule, all of which are determined collaboratively between the instructor and the student.

The proposed syllabus must be submitted for review **eight (8) weeks prior to the beginning of the term** in which the students wishes to start the course. Every submitted syllabus is reviewed by the Program Coordinator and one additional member of the Curriculum Committee of the School. Once approved, the Program Administrator registers the student in the course.

To take a Graduating Paper, a student must follow the following steps:

1. Identify a faculty member and approach them to ensure the faculty member is willing to supervise the student in the process of completing the graduating paper.
2. In collaboration with the instructor, create a course syllabus using the MSW Course Syllabus Template (available to all MSW instructors).
3. Complete the “Request for Exception to MSW Course Schedule” form *at least eight weeks prior to the course beginning*. This form is available on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas, under Resources. Students are asked to attach the proposed course syllabus to this form upon completion. The Program Coordinator may reach out to the course instructor to collect additional information about the course, and may ask for changes to be made to the course syllabus as a condition to approving the request. If changes are needed, both the student and the course instructor will be contacted.
4. Once approved, the Graduate Program Administrator will process the request and register the student in SOCW 598. The student and instructor will be notified via email of the decision.
5. Students completing a Graduation Paper will remain registered in SOCW 598 until the Program Coordinator receives the SOCW 598 Completion Form from the supervisor.

The table below summarizes the similarities and differences between Directed Studies and Graduating Paper:

	<b>Directed Studies</b>	<b>Graduating Paper</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	To advance a student's knowledge in a particular field of practice within Social Work; Focuses on a topic that is not covered elsewhere in the program; May be a foundational to developing to a thesis topic.	To produce a scholarly paper or another project with emphasis on knowledge translation; To contribute to the existing body of knowledge; To advance a student's knowledge in a particular field of practice within Social Work
<b>Length of Time</b>	One academic term (4 months)	1-2 academic terms (4-8 months)
<b>When taken</b>	Can be taken at any term within the program	Often taken in the second year near the completion of the

		program (last term or one before last)
<b>Expectation of Students</b>	To be determined between the student and the instructor	Final paper/project of publishable quality
<b>Supervisor/Instructor</b>	Faculty member is considered the student's Course Instructor	Faculty member is considered the student's Graduate Paper Supervisor;
<b>Grade</b>	Graded 0-100%; Submitted by the Course Instructor	Pass/Fail; Submitted by the Program Coordinator with the recommendation of the Graduate Paper Supervisor
<b>Process of Registration</b>	Submission of course syllabus to <a href="mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca">ask.socialwork@ubc.ca</a> 8 weeks prior to start of course; upon approval, student is registered in SOCW 541	Submission of course syllabus to <a href="mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca">ask.socialwork@ubc.ca</a> 8 weeks prior to start of course; upon approval, student is registered in SOCW 598
<b>Completion</b>	Must be completed at the end of the term in which it was scheduled	Student will automatically remain registered in SOCW 598 until the Program Coordinator receives the SOCW 598 Completion Form

#### *Taking Non-Preapproved Courses*

Upon approval of the program coordinator, MSW students may complete **up to two of the three required electives (or 6 of the 9 credits)** by taking graduate-level courses from a different unit within UBCO (outside of SOCW and HINT courses), from UBC Vancouver, from another university, or up to 6 credits of UBCO undergraduate level courses (300-/400-level).

To initiate the approval process, students are to submit the “Request for Exception to MSW Course Schedule” form (available on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas, under Resources) **and attach a copy of the syllabus of the course** they wish to take to their request (additional forms may be required; see information below). Students may need to request a copy of the syllabus directly from the course instructor. Syllabi from the last 1-2 years are acceptable for the review and approval process. In some cases, the Program Coordinator may reach out to the student to arrange a follow up meeting to discuss the request in more details.

#### Taking courses from a different unit in UBCO (graduate or undergraduate)

Students wishing to take a course outside of social work must provide a detailed rationale for how the course will support/advance their preparation for social work practice. Requests must be submitted **at least four weeks prior to the start of the academic term** in which the course is offered, with the exception of courses in Winter Term 2 (Jan-Apr) for which requests must be submitted **by the end of the first week of December**.

If approved, students will be required to complete the College of Graduate Studies [Registration/Audit Form](#) and submit it to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca) **at least one week prior to the start of the course.**

#### Taking courses from UBC Vancouver

Students may be able to take online graduate courses from UBC Vancouver. In addition to the Request form, students are required to complete the [College of Graduate Studies' "Registration in Vancouver Courses" form](#) and attach it to their request. Requests must be submitted **at least four weeks prior to the start of the academic term** in which the course is offered, with the exception of courses in Winter Term 2 (Jan-Apr) for which requests must be submitted **by the end of the first week of December**.

NOTE: An approval from UBC Okanagan to take a course from Vancouver campus does not guarantee a student's registration in the course. Final approval is made by UBC Vancouver, typically close to the start of the academic term in which the course is offered.

Taking courses from a different university through Western Deans' Agreement  
UBC Okanagan is a participating institution of the [Western Canadian Deans of Graduate Studies](#) (WCDGS). Under the [Western Deans' Agreement](#), "graduate students paying normal required tuition fees to their home institution will not pay tuition fees to the host institution". MSW students interested in taking a course from another participating institution must complete the [Western Deans' Agreement Authorization and Course Registration form](#) and **attach it to their Request for Exception to Course Schedule form**. As is the case with requesting to take courses from a different unit in UBCO, if the course is not a social work course, students must provide a detailed rationale for how the course will support/advance their preparation for social work practice. Requests must be submitted **at least four weeks prior to the start of the academic term** in which the course is offered, with the exception of courses in Winter Term 2 (Jan-Apr) for which requests must be submitted **by the end of the first week of December**. However, many participating institutions of the Western Deans' Agreement have earlier due dates than four weeks prior to the start of a term. Students are expected to review and become familiar with these deadlines prior to submitting their request.

NOTE: An approval from UBC Okanagan to take a course via the Western Deans' Agreement does not guarantee a student's registration in the course. Final approval is made by the hosting institution, typically close to the start of the academic term in which the course is offered.

Students are notified of the final decision via email once their request has been processed by the other institution. If approved, students are responsible for meeting all policies and procedures of the host institution. At the completion of the course, students are responsible for ordering an official transcript from the other institution and submitting it directly to the UBCO College of Graduate

Studies in order for the course to be indicated on the student transcript and be used towards the MSW degree.

### **Course Registration**

The MSW program is designed for full-time study. That is, students must be continuously registered in courses during all terms of the program by following the academic plan associated with their Field Education Stream, as specified on pages 13-15 in this Handbook. If students cannot maintain regular registration, they should contact the Program Coordinator and consider the option of taking a [Leave of Absence](#).

Students register in courses twice a year, in early July for the winter terms (September-April) and again in early March for the summer terms (May-August). The UBC Scheduling Office typically releases the final course schedule for the Winter Terms in mid-May and for the Summer Terms in mid-February (available to students via the SSC). Therefore, students can review and plan prior to their registration date. Students in the Advanced Track or in the second year of the Foundational Track are typically allowed to register one day prior to students in the first year of the Foundation Track. This is done to allow priority over seats in electives to students who are closer to graduation.

Here are some general guidelines for course registration:

- Students must register into core courses before adding their elective courses
- Students are expected to register into the elective courses they are planning to take ONLY (as opposed to reserving seats for themselves in additional courses)
- Exceptions to academic plans must be approved *prior* to a student registering in any courses different than the ones indicated in the registration email
- Students must clear any holds they have on their student accounts prior to course registration. Students with current holds are not be eligible to register into courses
- A few days prior to their registration date, students receive a registration email from the program with specific instructions on which courses and sections they should register, based on their assigned Field Education Stream. Students are expected to follow these instructions and register themselves via the Student Services Center (SSC).
- Any divergence from the instructions in the registration email may result in a student not being able to complete the required courses as planned.

Registration in SOCW courses is typically open for about 10 business days. Once registration closes, students are only able to drop themselves from courses; they are not able to add any courses to their schedules. If changes to registration are required after registration closes, students are to email [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca) and request assistance from the Program Administrator.

### **Transfer Credits**

All MSW core courses must be taken from the School of Social Work at UBC Okanagan. Credits from any course taken at a different university cannot be used to

satisfy the core course requirement of the program. In addition, all courses used toward the MSW program requirements must be taken while the student is enrolled in the program. Thus, credits of courses completed prior to the start of the program cannot be used to fulfill any of the MSW program requirements.

### **Course-Based vs Thesis-Based Option**

When students are admitted to the MSW program at UBC Okanagan, they are assigned to the course-based option by default. The vast majority of our students remain in the course-based option. Students choosing the thesis-based option of the program are required to complete a thesis under the supervision of a Social Work faculty member.

The Master's thesis is an independent research or scholarly project which aims to develop knowledge for clinical social work practice, provide a guided experience in conducting research, and demonstrate a student's mastery of the field she or he presents including a thorough knowledge of the relevant literature. Students may develop a project in any area of interest relevant to clinical social work. The thesis is based on independent study and scholarly research of a theoretical, empirical or historical focus, which builds or tests theory through disciplined and focused study. In addition, the thesis demonstrates the candidate's competence in completing a research project. Dissemination of the project results after its completion and before graduation is also required.

The purpose of undertaking a thesis is:

- to deepen understanding of specific theoretical and/or practice issues,
- to strengthen capacity for scholarly investigation, and
- to contribute to the social work knowledge base.

Undertaking a thesis can be a complex, challenging, and highly time-consuming process. *Students considering the completion of a thesis must be ready to stay in the program longer than the original length of the program* (i.e., three years for Foundational-Track students and two years for Advanced Track students).

Additional information students should know when considering the Thesis-Based option include:

- Students in the Thesis-Based option complete the same total number of credits as students in the course-based option (30 credits for Advanced Track and 60 credits for the Foundational Track).
- Students in the Thesis-Based track are required to complete the same field requirements as students in the Course-Based option (one 450-hour practicum per year)
- The first year of the Foundational-Track Thesis-Based option has the exact same course requirements as the Course-Based option of the program. The difference in requirements and expectations starts in the second year of the Foundational-Track (or the one year of the Advanced-Track).

- The course requirements of the Thesis-Based option (Year 2 of the Foundational Track or Advanced Track) are listed in the table below, and compared to the Course-Based option
- Students in the Thesis-Based option typically take fewer skill/practice-based courses and more research-related courses (as illustrated in the table below).

### *Thesis-Based Option Course Requirements*

The table below compares the program requirements of the Course-Based option and those of the Thesis-Based Option:

Year 2 of the Foundational Track OR Advanced Track (30 credits in total)		
	Course-Based Option	Thesis-Based Option:
<b>MSW Core Courses</b>	SOCW 551 (3 credits) SOCW 553 (3 credits) SOCW 554 (3 credits) SOCW 555 (3 credits)	SOCW 553 (3 credits) <b>and ONE of</b> SOCW 551/SOCW 554/SOCW 555 (3 credits)
<b>Field Education</b>	SOCW 558 (3 credits) SOCW 559 Field (6 credits)	SOCW 558 (3 credits) SOCW 559 Field (6 credits)
<b>Electives</b>	Three 3-credit electives	One elective (3 credits)
<b>Thesis</b>	N/A	SOCW 599 Thesis (9 credits) <b>and</b> An approved Advanced Research Methods course (3 credits)
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>30 credits</b>	<b>30 credits</b>

### *Entering the Thesis Option*

To enter the thesis option of the MSW program, the following forms must be completed and submitted to the program ([ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca)):

- Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor (found on the [College of Graduate Studies website](#))
- MSW Thesis-Option Request Form (can be found on the Program's Canvas page, under the Resources tab)

These must be submitted to the program prior to the start of the program for Advanced Track students, and prior to the end of the first year for Foundational Track students.

Because such a transition affects a student registration in courses, it should ideally be fully processed and completed prior to course registration date in early July so that the student can register to the correct course according to the thesis-based option of the program. Therefore, **students are strongly advised to submit requests to switch into the Thesis-Based Option by the end of May**. Requests may be submitted between June-August; however, they may not be approved prior to course registration in early July and therefore, their approval will likely warrant changes to the student's

course registration. Also, late requests may lead to further delays in the student progression and completion of the program.

Under special circumstances, students who are approved to enter the thesis-based option may wish to go back to the course-based option of the program. Students who choose to do so will be required to complete the MSW course-based requirements courses. Given that core courses are typically only offered once per year, such a transition may also lead to further delays in the student progression and completion of the program.

Students interested in switching to the Thesis-Based option of the program must carefully review and follow the instructions in [Appendix A](#).

### **Program Completion**

As indicated on the [Okanagan Academic Calendar](#), all Master's level graduate students at UBC Okanagan must complete all program requirements within 5 years of the initial course registration. This is applied to MSW students in either the course-based or thesis-based options. Under exceptional circumstances, extensions may be granted by the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies, with the recommendation of the program. The period a student is on a leave of absence is not counted toward the 5-year maximal time to completion.

In order for the program to be considered complete, students must have completed all MSW program requirements as listed in the [Academic Calendar](#) and all final grades must be entered. The date of program completion is the date on which the student's last final grade was entered. General information about [Program Completion and Graduation](#) can be found on the College of Graduate Studies' website.

At the end of every winter term, and at the end of every month during the summer terms, the Graduate Program Administrator reviews student files of students who are due for program completion. The program then makes recommendation of program completion to the College of Graduate Studies. Upon recommendation for completion by the MSW program, the College of Graduate Studies also evaluates each file individually. This process may take several weeks from the date the student's last final grade was entered. All course work must be complete with a final grade prior to the [published program completion deadline](#) to qualify for conferral of your degree. The College of Graduate Studies notifies the student when this review process is complete and you will receive a Program Completion email. More information related to Degree Conferral and Convocation can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The School of Social Work is governed by the UBCO Board of Governors, Senate, College of Graduate Studies, the Faculty of Health & Social Development (FHSD), and its own School Council. The UBC Okanagan Academic Calendar contains the UBCO [Campus-Wide Policies and Regulations](#), [Academic Regulations of the College of Graduate Studies](#) and the [Program Regulations for the School of Social Work](#) referred to in this section. Further, this section includes procedures to guide students through completing various program-related tasks. MSW students are required to conduct themselves in accordance with the following policies and regulations, guidelines and procedures.

### Criminal Record Check

As a condition of admission, applicants to the Master of Social Work program are required to submit a criminal record check that provides clearance to work with children and vulnerable populations during a field education practicum. MSW Students must submit a specific type of BC Criminal Record Check (*Type: Schedule B, Works With: Children and vulnerable adults*) from the BC Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. For more information and instructions please visit our MSW Program website – [Criminal Record Check](#). The BC Criminal Record check may be accessed via their [eCRC](#) site.

While in the program, students are required to provide notification and authorization for a further criminal record check should the student be charged with, or convicted of, a relevant criminal offence subsequent to their last Criminal Records Review Act check. BC Criminal Record Checks are valid for up to 5 years from being issued – if your criminal record check provided at the time of admission expires during your study you must submit a new criminal record check in advance of the expiry.

Some Field Education practicum agencies may require an updated criminal record check or an RCMP check in order to provide a practicum to a social work student. The additional measures and/or costs associated with field education will be the expense of the student. Additional information about sharing students' criminal record checks with their practicum agencies can be found in the MSW Field Education Handbook.

Failure to comply with the School of Social Work's criminal record check policy, or failure of the criminal record check may result in the student being involuntary withdrawn from the Master of Social Work program.

### Annual Student Accident Insurance

In August of every year, admitted and continuing students must purchase UBC student accident insurance for the upcoming academic year. The student accident insurance coverage is required for many field education practicums. Failure to comply with the School of Social Work's Student Accident Insurance policy may result in involuntary withdrawal from the program. Students will not be assigned to a field practicum without this insurance.

Information and instructions for purchasing UBC student accident insurance, including the deadline to complete this task, are announced on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas in early August.

### **Information about the Accident Insurance**

- The cost is \$7 annually and is paid by the student. This UBC student accident insurance covers students from September to August. Students are responsible for ensuring that their insurance is valid until the completion of their field practicum.
- This insurance covers coursework in environments where the risk of injury is greater than in a classroom, e.g., laboratories, certain field work, or field education.
- It provides a \$50,000 maximum benefit for death or dismemberment, \$100,000 for injury resulting in paralysis and a \$10,000 excess medical coverage, e.g., ambulance, prescription drugs.
- The plan does not provide 24-hour coverage. It applies only during the involvement of the student in coursework (or field education).
- The Student Accident insurance covers students for accidental injuries related to your UBC studies. This coverage does not cover students against claims made by third parties.
- Additional information about student safety during practicum is available through UBC [Risk Management Services](#).

### **Leave of Absence**

As stated in the [Academic Calendar](#), requests for a leave of absence must satisfy the requirements outlined by the College of Graduate Studies for [On-Leave Status](#).

Students must seek approval from the Program Coordinator of the School of Social Work prior to applying to the Dean of Graduate Studies for On-Leave Status. A leave is ordinarily granted when a student is best advised for personal, health, or other reasons to have time completely away from academic responsibilities. There is no leave fee assessed at UBC Okanagan for graduate students.

The Master of Social Work program is a cohort-based program and the courses in each term lead into the following term. Thus, a student must consider that they will need to re-enter the program where they left off after a leave to ensure program progression. A student may not take a leave of absence exceeding one year; those who fall into this category and wish to return to the School must reapply for admission to the program. Therefore, if a student is contemplating a decision to take a leave of absence from studies in the Master of Social Work program, it is recommended that the student make an appointment with the Program Coordinator to understand the academic implications of taking a leave. If the student is in a field practicum at that time, it is expected that the

Field Education Coordinator attends the meeting as well. The student may find it helpful to review the information about Leave of Absence available in the [Graduate Policy and Procedure Manual](#) of the College of Graduate Studies prior to their meeting with the Program Coordinator.

Once discussed with the Program Coordinator, the student is required to complete the [Leave of Absence form](#) and submit it to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca). The program will process and, if approved, submit the request to the College of Graduate Studies on behalf of the student. The student will be notified via email once the request has been approved by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

It is very important to check with all your funding supports prior to taking a leave. A leave may require adjustments to sponsorships, scholarships, awards, bursaries, student loans and student visas. Please check with each of these agencies that you are working with prior to submitting your Leave of Absence. International Students should contact International Programs and Services prior to submitting a leave request to ensure you are aware of all the immigration and student visa regulations that apply to your situation.

### **Withdrawal and Readmission**

Students progress through the Master of Social Work degree on a term-by-term basis, only by successfully completing the courses in each successive term. Students who are considering withdrawal should meet with the Program Coordinator to discuss the implications for their program. Specifically, students must make the necessary arrangements to return to study for the term in which the courses they require are offered. Refer to the Academic Regulations outlined by the College of Graduate Studies for Academic Progress and [Withdrawal, Reinstatement and Readmission](#). Please ensure you are aware of the requirements of any financial supports and/or international student policies that apply to you prior to requesting a program withdrawal.

### **Grading Practices**

Master's Level Grades are assigned according to the College of Graduate Studies' [grading scale](#):

<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>Letter Grade</b>
90–100	A+
85–89	A
80–84	A-
76–79	B+
72–75	B
68–71	B-
64–67	C+
60–63	C
0–59	F (fail)

## **Evaluation of Students' Progress**

As per the [Academic Regulations](#) of the College of Graduate Studies, satisfactory progress in any Master's program requires grades of a minimum of 60%, *and only up to 6 credits (i.e., two 3-credit courses)* with final grades of 60-68%. To keep track of students who may be struggling to maintain the satisfactory progress in the program, course instructors inform the Program Coordinator when giving a student a grade below 68%. The Program Coordinator works together with students to ensure they are able to regain and maintain a satisfactory progress. Therefore, the Program Coordinator reaches out to students who receive less than 68% in any course to further discuss the implications for their program and initiate the resolution process.

### *Failing a course*

Student who fail a mandatory course will be required to repeat the course for a higher standing. Since all MSW core courses are typically offered once a year, retaking a mandatory course will most likely significantly delay the completion of the program. Students who fail an elective course may take an alternate course on the recommendation of the Program Coordinator and the approval of the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies. If the Program Coordinator does not make a recommendation to allow a student to retake a failed core course or replace an elective course with another one, or if the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies does not approve the recommendation, the student will be required to withdraw from the program.

### *Grade Challenges/Appeals*

Students who wish to appeal decisions relating to their academic studies may do so, as outlined in the [Appeal Procedure](#) of the UBC Okanagan Academic Calendar. The appeal should be initiated as near the source of difficulty as possible, presumably to the Instructor, and progress to the Director of the School and then to the Dean of the Faculty. There is a standing committee of the University Senate – the Committee on Appeals of Standing and Discipline – that reviews all appeals made to the Senate, the senior academic authority in the University.

### *Deferred Standing*

As indicated on the College of Graduate Studies [Deferred Standing](#) (SD) Policy, a Deferred Standing is appropriate if medical or personal problems (of a very unusual nature) make it impossible for the student to complete the course requirements on time, but the requirements can be completed with an extension of time (i.e., Students granted Deferred Standing in Winter Session courses must complete all outstanding course requirements by August 23 following. Students granted Deferred standing in Summer Session courses must complete all outstanding work by December 23 following).

To initiate the request for a Deferred Standing grade, the student is required to provide a rationale for their request via email to the program at [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca) or directly to the Program Coordinator. The program then provides the student with the request form. The student completes part A and emails it to the course instructor to complete part B. If the instructor agrees to the SD grade, they complete the form,

specifying when remaining work is to be completed, and email the form back to the student for their review and signature (i.e., student agreeing to the terms of remaining work completion as set by the instructor). The student then submits the signed request form to the program at [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca). The program submits the request form to the Faculty Dean or Designate for final approval. The grade status will remain SD until all remaining work is complete and the course instructor submits a final grade.

Students and instructors must follow the College of Graduate Studies' guidelines and timelines of the Deferred Standing, as mentioned above.

### *Annual Progress Reports*

In addition to the MSW program's own evaluation of student progress, all graduate students at UBCO are required to submit an [Annual Progress Report](#) to the College of Graduate Studies. This is typically due in June of every year. Course-Based students complete [Annual Progress Report B](#) while Thesis-Based students complete [Annual Progress Report A](#). Students complete Part A of the Report and submit to the program for review. The Program Coordinator reviews and completes Part B of the Report. Meetings with the Program Coordinator are not typically required unless the Program Coordinator indicates otherwise on the Report. Students requiring a meeting with the Program Coordinator will be notified via email. Once all sections are complete, the program submits the Report to the College of Graduate Studies on behalf of the student. Detailed instructions for how to complete the Annual Progress Report are announced on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas in April.

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Students seeking accommodations during coursework and/or field education practicums should follow the [Academic Accommodation Process](#), as outlined by the College of Graduate Studies.

Students requesting accommodations due to disability are required to register with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). See Appendix B for more information about the DRC and the registration process.

### **Academic Concessions**

Students who, because of unforeseen events, experience a prolonged absence during a term must report to their course instructors as well as the Program Coordinator to request an academic concession as close as possible to the time when attendance and participation in their courses are adversely affected. See [UBC Campus-Wide Policy on Academic Concession](#) and College of Graduate Studies [Academic Concession Policy](#) for information on conflicting responsibilities and unforeseen events. Note that UBC's concession policy supports students who are absent from classes and scheduled examinations in order to participate in observances of religious significance, or observances of cultural importance to students who are First Nations, Métis or Inuit.

In many instances, an academic accommodation for coursework does not extend to field education. The Field Education Coordinator should be consulted prior to the field

education matching process if accommodation is sought. Failure to do so may result in not obtaining a field education practicum.

### **Freedom from Harassment and Discrimination**

The School of Social Work respects human diversity. We strive to treat all members of the School and its communities - students, staff, faculty, field educators, and community partners – with respect and dignity, regardless of their ability, age, class, culture, ethnicity, gender, political ideology, race, religion, sexual orientation, social condition, and all intersectionalities of life. Further, the School is committed to providing a collegial, safe, and pleasant working and learning environment for all members of the School, one that respects differences, champions fair treatment, and celebrates diversity. The School will not tolerate acts of discrimination and harassment.

#### *Reporting of Harassment or Discrimination*

Students who experience harassment and/or discrimination, or witness another person within the School being harassed and/or discriminated against, are advised to consult [UBC Policy 3 on Discrimination](#) and [UBC Statement on Respectful Environment for Students, Faculty and Staff](#), and consider reporting the incident(s) to a member of the School (e.g., Program Coordinator, Field Education Coordinator, Director, or a faculty member). If the concern involves sexual harassment, then students are also advised to consult [UBC Policy 131 on Sexual Harassment and Other Sexual Misconduct](#).

The School takes such reports very seriously and, in consultation with the Equity and Inclusion Office and/or the FHSD Dean or Associate Dean, ensures measures are taken to address the reported incident. It is important to know that the School may be obligated to report the incident to the BC College of Social Workers or other regulatory bodies, if an incident involves the professional conduct of a Registered Social Worker.

#### *Campus Support and Resources*

Students may wish to visit the [Equity and Inclusion Office](#) website for information about available support. UBCO also has a [Sexual Violence Prevention and Response](#) office that provides support, information about reporting, and links to community resources for those who have been impacted by sexual misconduct or assault.

#### **Student Privacy and Confidentiality**

The School of Social Work gathers and maintains student information the purposes of admission, registration, and other fundamental activities of the School, in accordance with the UBCO Campus-Wide Policies and Regulation around students' right for [Protection of Privacy and Access to Information](#). However, UBC and the School of Social Work also acknowledge that some scenarios require the disclosure of students' personal information, as included in the [Disclosing Personal Information for Health and Safety Reasons Fact Sheet](#).

The table below summarizes and provides examples of situations requiring information disclosure:

Type	Definition	When Permitted	Example within the School of Social Work
<b>Internal Disclosure</b>	Disclosure of personal information to other UBC employees, volunteers or service providers	According to Section 33.1(e) of the Freedom of Information Privacy Protection Act in British Columbia, internal disclosure can be done on a “need-to-know” basis	Course instructors disclose to the Program Coordinator the names and grades of students who received low grades in their course
<b>External Disclosure</b>	Disclosure of personal information to somebody outside UBC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For protecting the health and safety of the individual and/or others.</li> <li>For matching students to Field Education Practicums (see MSW Field education Handbook for more information)</li> </ol>	Sharing a student name with the police for the purpose of a law enforcement investigation

Also, in accordance with the Okanagan Academic Calendar UBC Graduate Admissions Student Declaration, the MSW program may share student email addresses with the Social Work Course Union for the purpose of running elections and communicating with the rest of the student body.

## Course-Related Policies

### Attendance

The Master of Social Work program is an intensive full-time program and is highly participatory in nature. Regular attendance is a professional commitment that is expected of students in all classes and other mandatory scheduled events. Vacations and other personal events should not conflict with classes or field education practicums.

**Specific policies for attendance expectations for each course are noted in each respective course syllabus.** Satisfactory attendance includes arriving on time, remaining for the duration of class or experience, and participating in all scheduled coursework and field education practicums. These expectation typically apply to synchronous virtual class time as required in online courses, unless notified otherwise by the course instructor. Students who do not attend or participate regularly as outlined in course syllabi may not meet course expectations. See the MSW Field Education Handbook for specific attendance expectations of students in practicums.

Repeated issues of attendance in any mandatory program events (including courses and field practicum) are considered professional misconduct in accordance to Standard 4.17 of the [Professional Standards for Students in the School of Social Work](#).

### Submission of Assignments

Students must submit course assignments by the deadline indicated on a course syllabus, and in accordance with the provided instructions (e.g., via email, Canvas, etc.).

Unless outlined differently in the course syllabus,

- Late assignments will be assessed as follows: 5% deduction of the total value of the assignment for each calendar day. (e.g., if the assignment is due on a Friday and submitted the following Thursday, the assignment is considered six days late and the value of the assignment will be reduced by 30%)
- Extensions may be granted on an individual basis for the following reasons: personal illness or accident (doctor's certificate may be required), compassionate reasons, major life crisis, and/or a significant health issue.

Students who are unable to submit a course assignment as instructed by the deadline and wish to request an extension must email the course instructor as soon as they become aware of the potential issue, and *at least 24 hours prior to the assignment's submission deadline*. In their email, students are expected to:

- Notify the instructor of the issue and if desired, request an extension,
- Provide a rationale for the request for extension, and
- Propose an alternative arrangement/deadline for submission

A course instructor may consult with the Program Coordinator before making a decision on any requests.

#### *Missed Exams*

Students who become aware of having to miss an exam must notify the course instructor as soon as possible. According to the [UBC Campus-Wide Policy on Academic Concession](#), justifiable reasons for missing an exam generally fall into one of two categories: (1) conflicting responsibilities, which include religious observance, or (2) unforeseen events. Students must notify the course instructor(s) at least two weeks in advance, if they are going to miss exam due to conflicting responsibilities. Instructors have the right to ask for a rationale in support of the student request and use that to determine how to accommodate the request (e.g., make allowance for any missed exam). Instructors are not required to make allowance for any missed exam if it is not satisfactorily accounted for. If an instructor has concerns around the reasons why the student missed the exam, they may choose to discuss their concern with the Program Coordinator and/or the Director of the School of Social Work.

The Program Coordinator keeps all concerns regarding attendance, submission of assignments, and missed assignments brought to their attention confidential. If multiple concerns have been raised, the Program Coordinator may reach out to the student to set a meeting to discuss these concerns and initiate a resolution process.

#### **Professional Standards for Students in the School of Social Work**

The School of Social work is committed to creating a learning environment conducive to optimal education and clinical practice. The School has identified the standards of

professional conduct set out in this policy as minimum requirements for the conduct of students registered with the School of Social Work.

All students are expected to abide by these Standards of Professional Conduct as well as by University policy at all times and, in particular, while in any settings where activities (e.g., academic, clinical, or social) are carried out under the auspices of the University. The School of Social Work adheres to and promotes UBC [Board of Governors Policies, Procedures and Guidelines](#), UBC Okanagan's [Campus-Wide Policies and Regulations](#), including the [Student Conduct and Discipline](#), and the [Canadian Association of Social Workers' \(CASW\) Code of Ethics](#).

Although satisfactory academic performance is a prerequisite to advancement, it is not the sole criterion in considering the suitability of a student for advancement from year one to year two, or advancement to course completion and then graduation. Students' professional conduct is evaluated as a component of the MSW program that also includes assessment of academic coursework and field education required for graduation.

Students who fail to meet expectations regarding professional conduct may be deemed unsuitable for further training and may be withdrawn from the program even though they meet all other program requirements. The process that takes place prior to a decision that a student is deemed unsuitable is described in this Handbook in [Appendix C](#).

### *Standards of Professional Conduct*

#### **1. Respect for the Inherent Dignity and Worth of Persons**

- 1.1 Maintain the best interest of the client as the primary professional obligation.
- 1.2 Respect the intrinsic worth of clients. Do not discriminate in interactions with others, based on age, race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, unrelated criminal convictions, or any other ground protected by human rights legislation.
- 1.3 Treat clients and their families with respect and dignity both in their presence and in discussions with other members of the health care team or academic community.
- 1.4 Treat all members of the health care team or academic community with respect and dignity in, or out of, their presence, in written communications, and in discussions with others.
- 1.5 Respect client autonomy by disclosing findings and test results pertinent to the client's care and by discussing treatment options with the client or legal representative and by involving the client, or legal representative, in the treatment options where appropriate and with regard to the client's preferences
- 1.6 Adhere to the guidelines for informed consent and consult with the client's legal representative when a client lacks the capacity to make treatment decisions.

#### **2. Pursuit of Social Justice**

- 2.1 Advocate change in the best interest of the client, and for the overall benefit of society.

### **3. Service to Humanity**

- 3.1 Place professional service before personal goals or self-interest.
- 3.2 Conduct research and complete assignments in accordance with University policies and in an ethical and unbiased manner, record and report results truthfully, and credit work and ideas developed by others. Appropriately acknowledge the contributions made by others to your research, publications and other presentations.

### **4. Integrity in Professional Practice**

- 4.1 Act with integrity and demonstrate personal and academic honesty in all interactions and communications, verbal and written.
- 4.2 Do not allow another profession, occupation, affiliation or calling affect the social work relationship with the client, professional judgment, independence and/or competence.
- 4.3 Do not provide social work services or otherwise behave in a manner that discredits the profession of social work or diminishes the public's trust in the profession
- 4.4 Ensure that all communications on the internet and social media are respectful and meet the same level of professionalism as would be expected in direct or other written communications with and about colleagues, instructors, students, and clients.
- 4.5 Use social media responsibly refraining from posting any information or comments related to clients, and from disclosing personal or confidential information about members of the health care team or academic community. Do not post information that is untruthful, hurtful, or disrespectful and use discretion when posting personal information.
- 4.6 Respect the intellectual property of others by adhering to University policy and guidelines related to copyright and distribution of written, audio or digital materials.
- 4.7 Accurately report and record history, test results, and other information pertinent to the care of the client.
- 4.8 Engage in ethical interactions with agencies, by declaring and managing conflicts of interest, real or perceived.
- 4.9 Create and maintain an atmosphere conducive to learning and to the conduct of professional work in all learning environments (classroom and all clinical settings). Maintain personal composure and consideration for others in all interactions. Model language, appearance, and demeanor appropriate to the academic or professional healthcare setting.
- 4.10 Establish and maintain appropriate personal boundaries in relationships with clients, staff, students and faculty, recognizing your potential influence over others and the vulnerability inherent in relationships in which there is a power disparity.

- 4.11 Respect the personal boundaries of others including, but not limited to, refraining from making unwanted romantic or sexual overtures, protecting personal information, and respecting individual workspace.
- 4.12 Do not engage in sexual or romantic relations with clients, or with individuals with whom you have a supervisor/supervisee relationship. Do not engage in exploitive relationships with colleagues, students, clients, or their families for emotional, financial, research, educational or sexual purposes.
- 4.13 Follow specified protocols to disclose and address clinical errors or misjudgments
- 4.14 Do not use alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs, in any way that could interfere with academic, professional or clinical responsibilities
- 4.15 Report professional misconduct to the appropriate authorities while taking care to avoid unjustly discrediting the reputation of members of the health care team or of the academic community.
- 4.16 Model behaviour consistent with the Code of Conduct and ethics of professional and licensing bodies, and teach and promote concepts of professional behaviour, ethical research and practice.
- 4.17 Meet expectations related to punctuality, attendance and participation in all academic classes and clinical settings including student practicums. Meet deadlines for group or individual assignments, or for the submission of requested documentation and information in the clinical or academic setting. Make timely alternative arrangements when you are unable to meet stated deadlines.
- 4.18 Use computers provided in the academic or health care settings in accordance with the applicable policies and engage for personal use only as provided in the site policies
- 4.19 Use personal communication devices in the academic or health care settings appropriately. Use of personal communication devices must not be disruptive or interfere with interactions with clients, families, or other health care providers. Comply with requests from clients or other health professionals to cease using personal communication devices in the academic or health care setting

## **5. Confidentiality in Professional Practice**

- 5.1 Respect and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information about clients. This includes limiting discussion of client health issues to appropriate settings for clinical or educational purposes and to those family member caregivers identified by client consent.
- 5.2 Avoid potential breaches of privacy and confidentiality when communicating through various modes of communication, especially the internet and social media, and take precautionary measures including using other more secure means of communicating as required.
- 5.3 Act in accordance with obligations imposed by privacy legislation related to collection, storage and disclosure of personal information and maintenance and use of health records. Disclose confidential information only when required or allowed by law to do so, or when clients have consented to disclosure.
- 5.4 Adhere to data access and security regulations in both academic and clinical settings. Do not share computer login codes, communicate client data via unsecured networks, or obtain or use any other information outside the bounds of

the defined access and use regulations. Use only institution-approved personal data storage devices, such as USB keys, and use appropriate password/encryption to protect sensitive data.

5.5 Do not access personal information related to clients or any other individuals stored in files or computers in the University or clinical setting unless authorized and required to fulfill your clinical duties to a client with whom you have a current health professional/client relationship.

## **6. Competence in Professional Practice**

- 6.1 Provide feedback, oral or written, to members of the health care team or academic community, in a timely, constructive and respectful manner to identify deficits and effect change and not to embarrass or humiliate.
- 6.2 Be accountable to yourself and all relevant stakeholders for personal decisions in the workplace and all learning environments.
- 6.3 Promote and maintain personal health and well-being and monitor your physical and mental fitness to perform duties in the academic and clinical setting. Seek appropriate assistance as required in the event you are physically or mentally unfit to perform your assigned duties
- 6.4 Recognize personal limitations when the situation exceeds your level of experience or competence, and consult with and refer to appropriate professional colleagues.
- 6.5 Participate in the processes of self-regulation of the profession.
- 6.6 Maintain and enhance competence through commitment to professional development and practice evaluation.
- 6.7 Demonstrate self-awareness and responsibility for your actions by accepting and responding appropriately to supervision and feedback regarding academic and clinical and professional performance.

## **Professional Communication**

Social workers interface with many different professionals who expect varying degrees of communication formality. MSW students represent the School of Social Work and the profession in any communication they engage in, on and off campus. Therefore, in addition to the above standards of professional conduct, the School of Social Work expects all students to develop and regularly practice strong professional communication skills while in the program.

### *Professional Use of Email*

In order to maintain a professional identity, students must review their email address to ensure it is appropriate for their professional interactions. For example, an email address of a cutesy or vulgar nature would not be considered appropriate in a professional context. Students are eligible to receive a UBC-hosted email address if they wish to. More information about obtaining a UBC-hosted email address can be found on the [UBC Vancouver IT website](#).

Part of communicating professionally via email includes the use of proper email etiquette. When writing a professional email, students should include a clear subject for the email, greeting, salutation, concise information, and closing with a proper signature.

### Email Signature

In their signature, students should include their full name and student number.

Students may add to their signature "MSW Student." The term 'candidate' is reserved by universities **for doctoral students only** so MSW students must **not** place "MSW (Candidate)" after their signatures on any emails, papers and/or forms.

Graduates are eligible to use MSW as their credentials on signatures *only after the conferral of their degree*. An unofficial signature on agency paperwork could become an issue during accreditation and certification reviews.

Students are expected to be courteous, use proper grammar, and avoid abbreviations and emojis. More information about professional email etiquette and helpful tips are available in [Appendix D](#) of this Handbook.

### Social Media

The School of Social Work recognizes the growing importance of electronic communication and is committed to supporting the rights of social workers to interact knowledgeably and socially in the social media. Members of the School of Social Work community are responsible and accountable for their actions and statements in social media, and recognize that appropriate boundary setting is vitally important in the development and maintenance of professional relationships. The use of discriminatory, derogatory or unfounded statements or willful misrepresentation on social media is not condoned by the School of Social Work and can result in disciplinary action up to and including school and/or field education termination. The Standards of Professional Conduct (4.4, 4.5 and 5.2) below provide specific expectations of professional conduct in relation to social media. The MSW Field Education Handbook includes additional guidelines for students in practicums.

### Academic and Professional Misconduct

#### *Academic Misconduct*

According to the [Policies and Procedures of the College of Graduate Studies](#), Academic Conduct that is subject to disciplinary measures includes, but is not limited to, engaging in, attempting to engage in, or assisting others to engage in any of the actions described below.

A. Cheating, which may include, but is not limited to:

1. falsification of any material subject to academic evaluation, including research data;
2. use of or participation in unauthorized collaborative work;
3. use or possession in an examination of any materials (including devices) other than those permitted by the examiner;

4. use, possession, or facilitation of unauthorized means to complete an examination (e.g., receiving unauthorized assistance from another person, or providing that assistance); and
  5. dishonest practices that breach rules governing examinations or submissions for academic evaluation see [Student Conduct during Examinations](#)).
- B. Plagiarism, which is intellectual theft, occurs when an individual submits or presents the oral or written work of another person as his or her own. Scholarship quite properly rests upon examining and referring to the thoughts and writings of others. However, when another person's words (i.e., phrases, sentences, or paragraphs), ideas, or entire works are used, the author must be acknowledged in the text, in footnotes, in endnotes, or in another accepted form of academic citation. Where direct quotations are made, they must be clearly delineated (e.g., within quotation marks or separately indented). Failure to provide proper attribution is plagiarism because it represents someone else's work as one's own. Plagiarism should not occur in submitted drafts or final works. A student who seeks assistance from a tutor or other scholastic aids must ensure that the work submitted is the student's own. Students are responsible for ensuring that any work submitted does not constitute plagiarism. Students who are in any doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism should consult their instructor before handing in any assignments.
- C. Submitting the same, or substantially the same, essay, presentation, or assignment more than once (whether the earlier submission was at this or another institution) unless prior approval has been obtained from the instructor(s) to whom the assignment is to be submitted.
- D. Impersonating a candidate at an examination or other evaluation, facilitating the impersonation of a candidate, or availing oneself of the results of an impersonation.
- E. Submitting false records or information, orally or in writing, or failing to provide relevant information when requested.
- F. Falsifying or submitting false documents, transcripts, or other academic credentials.
- G. Failing to comply with any disciplinary measure imposed for academic misconduct.

Social Work instructors who have evidence to believe an MSW student has engaged in academic misconduct may take disciplinary measures. Disciplinary measures taken by the course instructor may include, but are not limited to:

- Requiring a meeting with the student to warn the student and provide guidance for future appropriate academic behaviour (students who refuse/neglect to meet with the instructor may be subject to more severe consequences)
- deducting a portion of the assignment grade
- assigning a 0% to the assignment
- failing the student on the course

Regardless of the chosen response, instructors have the right to report the behaviour to the Program Coordinator, School's Director, and/or the Dean of College of Graduate Studies.

Disciplinary actions taken by the School of Social Work in response to a student's academic misconduct are guided by the [UBC Campus-Wide Policies and Regulations](#). These may include, but not limited to,

- a letter of reprimand;
- a failing grade or mark of zero on the assignment or in the course in which the academic misconduct occurred;
- suspension, cancellation, or forfeiture of any scholarships, bursaries, or prizes;
- suspension from the University for a specified period of time;
- expulsion from the University;
- denial of admission or readmission to the University for a specified or indefinite period of time;
- a notation of academic discipline on the student's record in the Student Information System, which will appear on the student's Transcript of Academic Record;
- revocation of a degree or other academic credentials dishonestly or improperly obtained.

#### *Professional Misconduct*

Any behaviour of an MSW student that is in contradiction with the [Professional Standards for Students in the School of Social Work](#) listed in this Handbook is considered professional misconduct. The procedure that takes place to address a student's alleged professional misconduct, including the process to appeal the Director's final decision, can be found in [Appendix C](#).

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR MSW STUDENTS**

This section provides information and instructions to guide students through the various tasks/activities they may complete while in the program. Additional resources that are not specific to the MSW program but have been found helpful for all students at UBCO can be found in [Appendix B](#).

### **MSW Program Homepage on Canvas**

[Canvas](#) is UBC's mobile-friendly online learning platform. The MSW Program Homepage on Canvas is designed to be a one-stop shop for information about the program. The Program uses this Canvas page to communicate information to students, post important dates and deadlines, and share available resources. Students are required to subscribe to the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas by the start of their program. Announcements are made regularly to inform students of updates, and provide instructions to guide students in completing various tasks. The Calendar feature of Canvas is used to advertise any events/meetings hosted by the School of Social Work. Other relevant events not hosted by the School are regularly added to the Job Board and Events tab.

It is the students' responsibility to regularly check the [M.S.W. Program Homepage](#) on Canvas and remain informed of required deadlines. It is recommended that students turn on the email notification option on Canvas to ensure they are notified of announcements made by the Program. More information about using Canvas, including downloading the Canvas App, can be found in [Appendix B](#).

### **Student Services Center (SSC) Emails**

The Program may email students using SSC. The SSC email is used to communicate information is only specific to a particular student or a small group of students. It is essential that students keep all their contact information (email, street address and phone number) updated in the SSC system to ensure that they receive all required information and notices from the School and other UBC departments.

### **School of Social Work Facebook Page**

Students and Alumni are encouraged to stay connected with the School via the School's Facebook page: [UBC School of Social Work | Okanagan Campus](#). The School uses the Facebook page to post community and School's events as well as available social work jobs. While some information is posted both on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas and the Facebook page, students must rely on the Program's Canvas page for current program-related information.

### **Student Advising: Academic and Professional**

The Program Coordinator is considered the academic student advisor for all MSW students. Questions regarding a student's program (e.g., elective course selection, leave of absence requests, consideration of thesis-based option, requests for exceptions to course schedules, need for programmatic accommodations) should be directed to the Program Coordinator. For professional advising, such as questions about

future social work careers and other professional choices, students may reach out to any faculty member of the School for advice and guidance.

### **School Breaks**

The School of Social Work follows the academic year as posted on the [UBCO academic calendar](#) by having midterm breaks in each Winter Term, and a Winter break in December. However, practicum schedules often do not follow the typical UBC term dates. Further information around practicum schedules in relation to university breaks is provided in the Field Education handbook on page 33.

#### *Winter Term 1*

In accordance with the [2021-2022 Academic Calendar](#), all social work courses in Winter Term 1 (September to December) start on September 7, 2021 and end on December 7, 2021. Winter Term 1 includes a one week Midterm Break from November 8-12 inclusive.

#### *Winter Break*

Since social work courses typically do not require a final exam scheduled within the University exam period, most MSW students get an extended winter break for most of December and into the first week of January, **with the exception of students in practicums that go from September until April** (these students must consult with their Field Instructor to determine their Winter break period). Prior to finalizing their plans for the winter break, students must carefully review their course syllabi to find out if indeed they do not have an exam or course final assignment scheduled during the official exam period of the University.

#### *Winter Term 2*

In accordance with the [2021-2022 Academic Calendar](#), all social work classes in Winter Term 2 (January to April) start on January 10, 2022 and end on April 11, 2022. Winter Term 2 includes a one week Midterm Break from February 21-25 inclusive. As indicated above, most social work summer courses do not follow the typical UBC summer term dates. Some summer courses may start before the end of Winter Term 2 and prior to the official start of the summer terms.

#### *Summer Terms*

Many Foundational Track MSW students complete their field education practicum during the summer months (May to August). These students only have a brief break at the end of August before the next academic year starts in September. Students who do not complete their field education practicum in the summer should plan to take summer courses, as indicated in the [Stream-Based Course Schedules](#) section of this Handbook. As indicated above, most social work summer courses are condensed and do not follow the typical UBC summer term dates.

### **Student Employment**

The School recommends that students carefully consider their hours of employment while registered in the MSW program. This is to ensure students are available to fully engage with various mandatory and optional learning opportunities and social activities

offered by the program. Due to the varying degrees of intensity of the program in different academic terms (e.g., terms in which students complete their Field Education practicums are highly intense), maintaining a full time job is simply impossible. Part time jobs should have some flexibility to allow students to focus on their studies during more intense periods. Some on-campus employment opportunities are available to students. Students can find information about these opportunities on the [Student Services](#) website. Employment opportunities that are relevant to the social work profession are often posted on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas.

### **Research Opportunities**

While the MSW program is not a research-intensive program, paid Research Assistantships (RAs) and volunteer research opportunities periodically become available. Social Work faculty members are encouraged to share any research positions, paid or unpaid, with the school by emailing [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca) so that these can be posted on the Job Board of the MSW Homepage on Canvas.

Students are also encouraged to seek out [work-study](#) positions as opportunities to get involved in campus research.

### **Student Feedback**

The School of Social Work prides itself for being open to receiving student feedback to enhance the MSW program further. There are many ways in which students can provide critical and constructive feedback to the School, including but not limited to:

- Completing of Student Evaluations of Teaching surveys at the end of each course (see information below),
- Attending and participating in the MSW Program Conversations events and Focus Groups throughout the year
- Completing various Feedback Surveys as they become available via Canvas (e.g., Field Educating Student Feedback Survey, Elective Survey, etc.).
- Emailing the Program Coordinator, Field Education Coordinator, or Director of the School with suggestions for improvement

### *Teaching Evaluation*

The University recognizes the importance of high-quality teaching for the academic preparation of its students, and accordingly requires that instructors to be annually evaluated by procedures that include provision for assessment by students. Students are encouraged to provide feedback to instructors by completing the teaching evaluation provided in class each term. This feedback is part of the evaluation of teaching effectiveness required by the Committees on Appointments, Promotion and Tenure and by the Director. It is expected that students will provide fair and constructive feedback to each instructor.

### **Student Involvement in the School's Governance**

Students can become involved in the governance of the School by becoming student representatives on various School's committees and Task Groups.

[Appendix E](#) lists the School's Committees which include 1-2 student representatives. Students may also be asked to participate in short-term task-oriented groups such as Orientation Event Task Group and Service Day Task Group.

## Awards

Graduate student awards are administered by the [College of Graduate Studies](#). The vast majority of these awards are only available for students in thesis-based graduate programs. However, there are two awards that are available for MSW students only:

### *Jody Rud Memorial Award in Social Work*

An award has been endowed by the family and friends of Jody Rud for a full-time student in the Masters of Social Work Program in the School of Social Work, Faculty of Health and Social Development, at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus. Preference is given to students with an emphasis on drug and alcohol addiction or homelessness. Consideration will be given to students who demonstrate a combination of academic achievement and volunteerism, community involvement, or campus leadership. Jody will be remembered for his compassionate nature and his dedication to making a difference in the lives of others.

Students self-nominate themselves for this award during the month of April. The School's Awards Committee then reviews the nominations and submits the final recommendation to the College of Graduate Studies at the end of April. Specific instructions and deadlines are posted on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas early in April.

### *Matthew Yip Memorial Award*

An award has been endowed by family, friends, and colleagues in memory of Matthew Yip, BASc '15. The award is offered to an outstanding graduate student in the Master of Social Work program in the School of Social Work in the Faculty of Health and Social Development at The University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus and is based upon a combination of academic achievement and excellence in a field education practicum which focuses on mental-health issues. Preference is given to students whose studies focus on depression, anxiety, and suicide.

The recipient of this award is selected on the recommendation of the School's Awards Committee, in consultation with the Field Education Office. The committee submits the final recommendation to the College of Graduate Studies at the end of April.

## Degree Completion Letter

Students may request a Degree Completion Letter for the purpose of satisfying a condition of employment and/or meeting the registration requirements of the BC College of Social Workers (BCCSW). Students may request a Degree Completion Letter from via email after they receive the program completion email from the College of Graduate Studies. The letter will be provided to the student within five business days. The School can send a PDF of this letter directly to BCCSW, at the request of the student.

## Appendix A: Procedure of Switching to the Thesis-Based Option

Prior to submitting the request to transfer into the thesis option of the program, students must complete the following:

1. Read carefully the information in this Student Handbook about the requirements of the Thesis-Based option of the MSW program
2. Review the expectations associated with conducting a Master's thesis and defending it as set by the [College of Graduate Studies](#)
3. Review the [School of Social Work Contact Us](#) webpage to become familiar with the research interests and active research projects of the School's Faculty, to identify a potential thesis supervisor.
4. Reach out to a potential faculty supervisor, to start developing the relationship and exploring the option of completing a thesis under their supervision.

*Optional at this point:*

- Students may wish to review the resources about [Thesis and Dissertation](#) available on the College of Graduate Studies website, to get a sense of the process involved in conducting a thesis. These resources will become extremely helpful once the student initiates the thesis process.
- Students may also wish to schedule a meeting with the Program Coordinator at this point to ensure they have a good understanding of the requirements associated with moving into the Thesis-Based option (approval is not necessary at this point; the purpose of the meeting is student advising)

Once a faculty member has agreed to act as the thesis supervisor, the student and supervisor must:

1. Become familiar with the resources about [Thesis and Dissertation](#) available on the College of Graduate Studies website, including the resources available on campus for students completing theses.
2. Carefully review the information on the [graduate student-supervisor relationship](#) on the College of Graduate website
3. Complete the Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor available on the [graduate student-supervisor relationship](#) webpage and submit along with the request form (see last step below)
4. Select the Supervisory Committee, following the College of Graduate Studies' guidelines, as specified in the section on [Supervisors, Supervisory Committees, and Graduate Program Coordinators](#).
5. Identify the specific topic of the thesis
6. Complete and submit the "Request to Enter the Thesis Option" form (available on the MSW Program Homepage on Canvas, under Resources), along with the

completed “Checklist of Expectations for Graduate Student and Supervisor” to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca).

Upon receiving the completed request, the Program Coordinator will reach out to the supervisor(s) and committee members to verify their role on the student’s thesis committee. The Graduate Program Assistant will inform the student and the faculty supervisor of the Program Coordinator’s decision and will keep an electronic copy of the request in the student’s electronic folder.

Once a student’s request has been approved, students must complete the following:

1. Registration into SOCW 599: Submit a formal email request to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca) asking to be registered into SOCW 599. The Graduate Program Assistant will register the student and will maintain the student registration in the thesis course until the thesis is fully complete. It is the student’s responsibility to check their registration and ensure they maintain registration in SOCW 599 as long as there are still in the process of completing the thesis.
2. Selection of an Advanced Research Method course: In consultation with the thesis supervisor, students need to identify an advanced research method course that they will complete earlier in the process of conducting their thesis. Previously approved Advanced Research Methods at UBCO include:

NRSG 506 *Qualitative Research*

IGS 515 *Advanced Qualitative Methods*

PSYO 507 *Advanced Statistics and Research Methods*

HINT 504 *Qualitative Methods: Interdisciplinary Health*

Other Advanced Research Methods may be used towards this requirement upon approval of the Program Coordinator. If the selected course is not a HINT course, the student needs to follow the instructions for [taking a non-pre approved course](#). In their request, students can simply indicate that this Advanced Research Method Course is required for the Thesis-Based option of the program in their rationale.

3. Registration into the Advanced Research Method course: Upon approval of the Advanced Research Method course, the students may be able to independently register in the course. If they are unable to do so (e.g., if they required special permission to override the pre-requisites), they are required to complete the [Registration/Audit Form](#) and submit it to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca).
4. Choosing which MSW Core Course to take: In consultation with the thesis supervisor (and the Program Coordinator, if needed), students need to decide which MSW core course they wish to take (SOCW 551, SOCW 554, or SOCW 555). Students may wish to choose a course that is offered when they are NOT in their field placement to reduce their workload. The student is expected to notify the Program Coordinator once this decision is made by email to

[ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca). The student will be able to register themselves into the course as all other students.

*Optional:*

Students are encouraged to review the College of Graduate Studies website to learn more about the [Award Opportunities](#) available to thesis-based Master's students.

### **Additional Thesis Resources**

Students can meet with a staff member of the [Centre for Scholarly Communication](#) or with a [COGS Graduate Online Learning Coach](#) to discuss degree and thesis completion timelines. Students can also use the [Thesis Calculator](#) as a resource to help plan their thesis and timeline. NOTE: The [Thesis Calculator](#) is a UBC Vancouver resource so students at UBCO need to substitute in all of the Okanagan equivalents (e.g. UBCO Library rather than UBCV Library, CSC rather than CWSC, etc.).

## **Appendix B: General UBCO Student Resources**

The resources in this appendix, ordered alphabetically, are relevant to students at UBCO and are not specific to the MSW program.

### **Aboriginal Programs & Services**

Aboriginal Programs & Services provides community and culturally appropriate services and support to First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Students studying at UBCO. There is a designated Aboriginal Centre located in the University Centre (UNC) Room 212.

Aboriginal Student Advisors provide support from application through graduation. They assist Indigenous students navigate their academic journey with a holistic approach, including academic, cultural, social and physical considerations. To connect with the Aboriginal Programs and Services, please visit their [website](#).

### **Canvas**

[Canvas](#) is UBC's new mobile-friendly online learning platform. Students log on to Canvas using their CWL user name and password. In Canvas, instructors can share materials (text or multimedia), enable student collaboration and discussion, manage assignments and quizzes, and assign grades. All MSW instructors use Canvas to teach their course(s). Students must be registered in a course to gain access to its shell on Canvas. Instructors often work on their Canvas course shell much before the course starts and publish it to students closer to the start of the course. Students are encouraged to download the [Canvas App](#) to their smart phones for easy access to information.

### **Conferral, Convocation, and Final Transcripts**

According to the [College of Graduate Studies](#) at UBCO, there are four Graduate Conferral dates every year, in September, November, February and May. MSW students that have met their program requirements will be recommended for conferral of their degree in the next occurring conferral date (e.g., completing all program requirements by the end of June means students will be eligible to confer their degree in September).

Students must make a formal application for degree conferral via the [Student Service Centre \(SSC\)](#). Students may apply for degree conferral within their last term in the program, even before completing all program requirements. However, students' application for graduation will not be approved unless all degree requirements are completed by the posted deadlines on the [College of Graduate Studies](#) website. As part of the application process, students are asked whether they will be attending the graduation ceremony (i.e., Convocation) in which they are eligible to participate. Students must apply for graduation regardless of whether they plan to participate in the Convocation Ceremony.

#### *Convocation Ceremony*

UBCO holds one Convocation Ceremony every year in June. Students must complete all program requirements by the end of April and apply for graduation to

be eligible to participate in the June Convocation Ceremony of the same academic year. Students who complete their program requirements after April 30 are invited to participate in the Convocation Ceremony in June of next year. The UBCO Ceremonies Office will email students who have applied for graduation with details about the June ceremony. Students may wish to view the [Graduation Checklist](#) to ensure they are fully prepared for the Convocation event in June.

#### *Final Official Transcript*

Students who need an official transcript for the purpose of professional registration and/or employment can order one through the Student Service Centre (SSC). It is recommended that students submit their order after their degree conferral date to ensure the official transcripts indicates the degree has been awarded. Students who have any type of hold on their student accounts (e.g., academic, financial, equipment, parking, bookstore, etc.) will not be able to order a transcript.

#### **Disability Resource Centre**

The Disability Resource Centre offers programs and services to foster an accessible and welcoming campus, providing access to accommodations for students to overcome disability-related challenges that impede academic success. If you have a disability, an injury or chronic illness, and require academic accommodations to meet the course objectives and/or Field Education requirements, please visit the [DRC website](#) to learn more about the process of registration. The DRC is located in University Centre (UNC) Room 214.

#### **Email Service**

The [Student and Alumni Email Service](#) is an optional combination of email aliasing, forwarding, and UBC hosted mailbox. All active and registered students are eligible to sign up for a <CWLusername>@student.ubc.ca email account that can be used to send and receive mail.

This account also grants students access to a range of UBC services, including Microsoft Teams and OneDrive.

#### **Equity and Inclusion Office**

Through leadership, vision and collaborative action, the Equity & Inclusion Office continues to further UBC's commitment to excellence, diversity, and inclusion. The Equity & Inclusion Office works with campus partners to ensure adherence with Employment Equity (Policy #2), Discrimination & Harassment (Policy #3), and the UBC Statement on the Respectful Environment. To learn more about their services and events, please visit the [Equity & Inclusion Office website](#). The Equity & Inclusion Office is located in the University Center (UNC) Room 325H. The Equity & Inclusion Office also publishes an e-newsletter that includes equity, diversity, and inclusion activities at UBC. They send occasional but timely emails, which highlight relevant news, events, and involvement opportunities at UBC, and beyond to subscribed members of the UBCO community. MSW students are welcome to [sign-up](#) to their newsletter and learn about these initiatives.

## **Financial Support**

Students requiring financial support should visit the [Student Services](#) website to learn about the financial resources available to them, including financial advising, student loans and grants, and emergency financial aid.

### *Students in Financial Difficulty*

Students who find themselves in an emergency situation or faced with an unexpected expense, are encouraged to contact UBC Student Services. They can make an appointment with an advisor who will review the financial situation and explore funding options.

### *UBC Bursary Program*

The UBC Bursary Program aims to cover the gap between students' Canadian government student loans and cost of living. Students can find useful information about the [UBC Bursary Program, and the application deadlines](#), on the Student Services website.

## **Health & Wellness Center**

At UBC Okanagan health services to students are provided by Health and Wellness. Nurses, physicians and counsellors provide health care and counselling related to physical health, emotional/mental health and sexual/reproductive health concerns. As well, health promotion, education and research activities are provided to the campus community. If you require assistance with your health, visit the [Health and Wellness website](#) for more information or call (250) 807-9270 to book an appointment. They are located in the University Center (UNC) Room 337.

## **Library**

Students are encouraged to utilize the library resources available to them in order to advance their literacy and academic skills. These resources include:

- Subject Librarian: Students wishing to improve upon their literature search skills can arrange to meet with a [subject librarian](#) to determine what skills need improving upon and how to address them.
- Subject guide: The [UBC Social Work subject guide](#) lists core resources for Social Work.
- Centre for Scholarly Communication: The [UBC Okanagan Library's Centre for Scholarly Communication \(CSC\)](#) supports graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, staff and faculty in disseminating their research. The CSC provides one-on-one consultations and workshops, including writing support for theses, dissertations, journal articles and grant proposals.

## **Pride Resource Center**

The [UBCO Pride Resource Centre](#) (PRC) is managed by the UBC Student Union Okanagan. It was founded in 2003 and is a space on campus where LGBT and Ally students can come and talk about issues and challenges they face on and off campus. Above all, the PRC strives to provide a space on campus where all students

can feel welcome and comfortable regardless of gender or sexual orientation. The PRC works to create a social atmosphere within the university to foster discussion and awareness on campus of the diversity of sexualities and genders. The Center is located in the University Center (UNC) Room 133.

### **Spaces for Graduate Students on Campus**

UBCO has two spaces on campus reserved for use by current registered graduate students.

- (1) The [Graduate Collegium](#), located on the fourth floor in Arts and Science building (ASC 460)
- (2) The Graduate Student Commons, located on the third floor of the UBCO Commons Building (COM 310)

Students can use these spaces to study, hang out, eat lunch, engage in intellectual discussion(s) and collaborate with other graduate students, and/or for planned events.

To request access to these spaces, please complete the [Graduate Space Access Request Form](#). Once the requests are processed (may take up to two weeks), students receive SALTO cards which are used to access these rooms. Students who request access to the Graduate spaces but already have SALTO cards will not receive an additional card; rather, their existing card will be updated to reflect the additional access they receive. Questions about accessing or booking these spaces can be sent to [gradcommons.ok@ubc.ca](mailto:gradcommons.ok@ubc.ca).

### **Spiritual Multi-Faith space**

The Spiritual/Multi-Faith Space was created to welcome the diverse spiritual and multi-faith practices of the UBC Okanagan campus community. The absence of any particular religious iconography or symbols sets a comfortable, neutral tone so students, faculty, and staff can express their spirituality and faith in a relaxed and private setting. The Spiritual/Multi-Faith Space is located in the University Centre (UNC), Room 328. For more information about this Space, visit their [webpage](#).

### **Tuition**

UBC policy requires that every graduate student maintain continuous registration (year-round) and be responsible for the tuition and fees association with their degree. The Master of Social Work degree tuition is determined annually and published in the Academic Calendar in the [Specialized Master's Degree Program](#) section. At the graduate level, UBC Okanagan tuition is by installment, not per credit hour enrolled. Graduate students pay three tuition installments per year, which coincide with the beginning of the three academic terms (September, January, and May). In addition, all full-time graduate students are required to pay a minimum of three full-time tuition installments and student fees, regardless of the length of their program.

All MSW students continue to pay full-time tuition installments and student fees until they complete all program requirements. Therefore, Foundational Track students typically pay six installments until program completion, and Advanced Track students typically pay three installments until they complete all program requirements.

Failure to pay tuition and fees will result in a financial hold inhibiting registration for courses and an interest penalty. To avoid the potential risks of being restricted from course registration or having other university financial holds, students must ensure there is no outstanding balance on their student financial account. Students who have individual inquiries about their financial accounts may email their inquiries to [ask.socialwork@ubc.ca](mailto:ask.socialwork@ubc.ca).

## **Appendix C: Procedure for Addressing Alleged Professional Misconduct**

Concerns or issues related to a student's professional conduct identified by a faculty member, staff, student peer, or community member should be set out in writing, ideally using the School's Incident Report Form, and sent directly to the Chair of the Suitability Committee. These Incident Reports will be saved in the student's file to which only the School's administration has access. The Chair of the Suitability Committee will then initiate a meeting of the Suitability Committee to review the report and determine next appropriate steps.

### **Stage 1: Suitability Committee Review**

The Suitability Committee will review the material submitted and will set a meeting with the student to discuss the concerns and issues raised. The student will be provided with a copy of all documentation under consideration by the Suitability Committee, unless there is a specific reason (e.g., 3<sup>rd</sup> party privacy) to withhold information submitted by the complainant. The student will be given the opportunity to respond to the concerns in this meeting.

#### *Corrective Action Plan (CAP)*

The Suitability Committee will develop the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) with input from the student and any other relevant personnel involved in the breach of professional conduct or in the remedial action. The CAP will clearly identify the misconduct, the professional standards and/or program policies that were breached, any remedial action to be taken by the School and the student and a date by which the student must have completed the remedial action ("Review Date").

The Chair of the Suitability Committee will review the implementation of the CAP, the student's progress and will assess whether the student has successfully remediated. If the student has not successfully completed the remedial steps by the Review Date, the student and Director will be notified that the student has not met the remediation requirements and the student will be required to meet with the Director within two weeks of the Review Date.

### **Stage 2: Decision on Dismissal from Program**

A student may be recommended for dismissal from the Program on the basis of unsuitability in the following circumstances:

- When a student fails to complete the required remedial steps set out in the CAP;
- When a student continues to demonstrate unprofessional conduct; and
- When a student's breach of professional standards is so egregious that the Chair of the Suitability Committee determines that a remediation plan is not appropriate.

The Director will notify the student in writing that, as a result of the student's failure to adequately resolve the concerns, and/or the serious nature of the concerns, the student

is at risk of being dismissed from the Program on the basis of unsuitability. The letter will clearly set out the basis upon which dismissal is being considered.

A meeting will be scheduled with the student, the Director, and any other individuals as deemed required by the Director. The student may choose to bring a support person to this meeting. This person is present only to provide clarification and support to the student, not to speak on their behalf. The identity of the support person must be conveyed to the Director at least two days prior to the meeting or the support person may not be permitted to be present.

Stage 2 meetings will be led by the Director and the agenda will be as follows:

1. The Director will review the basis upon which the decision to dismiss is being considered.
2. The student will be permitted to present any other relevant information or extraordinary circumstances that the student wishes the Director to take into consideration in reaching a decision with respect to the student's suitability.
3. During the meeting the Director may ask the student and advocate and complainant to leave the room to allow for an in-camera discussion of the new information.
4. The Director will determine whether the additional information warrants providing a further opportunity for the student to demonstrate an ability to meet the standards.
5. The Director will make a decision with respect to the outcome and the student will be notified of the decision within one week of the meeting.
6. If a further opportunity is provided, a Corrective Action Plan will be developed by the Director, with input from the student, any other relevant personnel involved in the breach of professional conduct or in the remedial action, and the Chair of the Suitability Committee. The plan must clearly identify goals and performance standards, a timeframe for correction of deficits and consequences of failure to correct the deficits. The Director may impose any other conditions that must be met by the student that the Director deems appropriate and necessary for the remedial period to be successful. This may include referral to counselling or evidence of compliance with medical treatment, in those cases in which the additional information related to a claim that the conduct was a result of a medical condition.
7. If the decision is to dismiss the student, a formal letter from the Director will be forwarded to the student and to relevant School of Social Work personnel. The Director will notify the Dean of the Faculty of Health and Social Development.

## **Appeal of a Director's Suitability Decision**

### *1. Initiating an Appeal*

- 1.1. All appeals on academic standing are made to the FHSD Dean. The student must forward a letter of appeal to the Dean identifying the decision under appeal and clearly setting out the grounds of appeal in accordance with this Policy. The letter of appeal must include any documents in support of the appeal that the student wishes

to be considered. The student's letter of appeal must be received in the Dean's office within 10 days of the decision the student wishes to appeal.

- 1.2. The Dean, or delegate, will review the letter of appeal to determine whether the appeal is based on one of the grounds of appeal set out in this Policy. If the Dean, or delegate, determines that the appeal is not based on a ground of appeal set out in this policy then the Dean may dismiss the appeal.
- 1.3. If the Dean, or delegate, determines that the appeal is based on one of the permissible grounds of appeal set out in this Policy then the Dean will refer the appeal to the Faculty of Health and Social Development Academic Standing Committee ("Advisory Committee") which will be chaired by the Associate Dean, Faculty of Health and Social Development ("Chair") or designate.

#### *2. Composition of Advisory Committee*

- 2.1. In addition to the Chair (non-voting), the Advisory Committee will be composed of the following individuals:
  - (a) Vice-Chair, Associate Dean Academic Programs
  - (b) Two faculty members from each School. Only one member from the student's School attends deliberations and has voting privileges.
- 2.2. In the event an Advisory Committee composed of these individuals cannot be constituted in a timely manner the Chair may appoint a senior faculty member as an alternative committee member.

#### *3. Grounds for Appeal*

A decision on academic standing reflects the assessment of the Suitability Committee and Director of the School of Social Work as to whether a student has met the professionalism standards of the Master of Social Work program.

- 3.1. A student may appeal a decision on academic standing only on the following grounds:
  - (a) The decision is inconsistent with the Standards of Professionalism adopted by the School of Social Work;
  - (b) The decision did not take into account all relevant evidence or relied on irrelevant evidence;
  - (c) The decision is based on an arbitrary or discriminatory exercise of academic judgment by the faculty or program.
- 3.2. In rare circumstances a student may appeal a decision on the basis of additional mitigating evidence that was not known to the student, and not available to the decision maker, at the time the decision was made.
- 3.3. A student may not appeal a decision solely on the basis that the student does not agree with the decision of the Director.

#### *4. Terms of Reference of the Advisory Committee*

- 4.1. The Advisory Committee is a committee of inquiry constituted to review student appeals on academic standing referred by the Dean and to make recommendations to the Dean regarding the disposition of the appeal. The Advisory Committee will

review information relevant to the issues raised in the appeal before making a recommendation to the Dean.

- 4.2. The Advisory Committee will confine itself solely to questions arising from the grounds of appeal set out in this policy. The Advisory Committee may not substitute its judgment for that of the faculty on the basis that, on the evidence, the Advisory Committee would have reached a different conclusion.

#### *5. Advisory Committee Meeting*

- 5.1. The Advisory Committee will notify the decision maker (i.e. the Director of the School of Social Work) of the request for appeal and will provide the decision maker with a copy of the letter of appeal. The decision maker may be asked to provide a written response to the matters raised in the appeal. A copy of any written response provided by the decision maker will be provided to the student and the student will be allowed to respond either in writing or orally during the meeting with the Advisory Committee.
- 5.2. The Advisory Committee will review all materials relevant to the decision under appeal and the grounds of appeal including any applicable professionalism policies, the student's academic record, any applicable narrative assessments and any faculty committee minutes relevant to the decision under appeal.
- 5.3. The Advisory Committee will schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the appeal and to attempt to resolve the dispute. At the discretion of the Chair, the decision maker may also be invited to attend this meeting. Neither the student nor the decision maker will be represented by legal counsel at this meeting. However, the student may be accompanied by a support person. This meeting could be arranged through videoconferencing as appropriate.
- 5.4. Either before or during the meeting with the student, the Advisory Committee may request additional information, oral or written, related to the decision or the grounds of appeal. All such additional information will be shared with the student and the decision maker and they will be given an opportunity to respond to the additional information.
- 5.5. After consideration of all information relevant to the appeal the Advisory Committee will make a recommendation to the Dean with respect to the disposition of the appeal based on a majority vote of the committee members who reviewed the appeal,
- 5.6. The decision and recommendation of the Advisory Committee will be provided to the Dean in writing.
- 5.7. The Advisory Committee may recommend that the decision be overturned, modified with specific directions or upheld as written.

#### *6. Decision of the Dean*

- 6.1. Upon receipt of the recommendation of the Advisory Committee, the Dean may request additional information from the student or the decision maker before making a final decision. Any additional information provided in response to a request from the Dean will be provided to the student or faculty and they will have an opportunity to respond to the information.

- 6.2. The Dean will make the final decision regarding the disposition of the appeal after consideration of the Advisory Committee's recommendation and of any additional information provided in response to the Dean's request under paragraph 6.1.
- 6.3. The Dean will notify the student of the final decision in writing at the earliest opportunity.
- 6.4. A student may appeal the decision of the Dean to the Senate Committee on Academic Standing. Information on how to bring an appeal to the Senate Committee is available in the UBC calendar.

## **Appendix D: MSW Professional Communication Tips**

1. Grad school is a great time to start honing your professional skills and build your network.
  - a. Practice formality when addressing your professors – especially in emails.
    - i. As a practicing social worker, you will interface with MANY different professionals who will expect varying degrees of formality. Err on the side of being formal, knowing it is often easier to move from formal to informal than it is to start informal and move to formal.
    - ii. Ensure your email address is professional looking and sounding, that it does not have any nicknames, inappropriate meaning or saying.
    - iii. See the example of how to write a professional email below.
  - b. Engage in professional conversations with EVERYONE, included by not limited to your professors, agency staff and clients, and your peers.
    - i. Remember you represent UBC, the School of Social Work, and the profession of social work.
    - ii. Before you ask a question or make a comment, THINK!  
T: Is it thoughtful?  
H: Is it helpful?  
I: Is it inspiring?  
N: Is it necessary?  
K: Is it kind?
  - c. Social media can be a great tool to build your professional network when used thoughtfully.
    - i. Pause before posting.
    - ii. Think before friending/following.
    - iii. Privacy settings are key.
    - iv. Privacy extends to social media – posts should not include clients or agency information.
    - v. Once it's in social media, anyone can access it.

### **Writing an email to your professor:**

1. Your first email to a professor should be written like a formal letter.
2. Avoid addressing your professor by their first name until they have given you permission to do so.
3. When in doubt, err on the side of formality.
4. Make sure you clearly explain the reason why you're emailing them, using complete sentences and proper grammar/punctuation.

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Word ribbon interface with the 'Message' tab selected. The title bar reads 'Meaningful subject related to topic of email - Message (HTML)'. The ribbon tabs include File, Message, Insert, Options, Format Text, Review, ADOBE PDF, and a search bar 'Tell me what you want to do...'. Below the ribbon is a toolbar with various icons for cutting, pasting, and formatting text. The main content area displays an email message with the following details:

**To...**: FIRST EMAIL

**Subject**: Meaningful subject related to topic of email

**Salutation:**  
Dear Professor \_\_\_\_\_  
Dear Dr. \_\_\_\_\_,  
Dear First name Last name, -> avoid Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms. if you are unsure of the recipients preference

**Body:**  
Introduction to yourself – who are you and why are you emailing the professor  
Be sure to use complete sentences and proper grammar.  
Proof read and use spell check.  
Avoid abbreviations and emojis (e.g. lol, 😊). This email should be written like a formal letter.

**Conclusion:**  
Thank the person for their time and provide information about how to contact you.

**Signature** (even though your email says your name, be sure to sign your emails with your first and last name):  
Warm regards,  
Best,  
Sincerely,

2. Self-directed learning and educational autonomy are key skills you should be practicing. Knowing how to answer your own questions will be important when you are working. How can you access information on your own?
  - a. Before you email your professor a question, ask yourself:
    - i. Is it in the syllabus? On Canvas? In the Handbooks? In a handout?
    - ii. Does a classmate know the answer?
    - iii. Can you Google it? Find it on a website?
  - b. Think to yourself – what steps have I taken to use my existing understanding and knowledge to answer my question?
  - c. Still don't know? Then email or talk to your professor.
  - d. Finally, send your email during business hours.

## **Appendix E: School of Social Work Service Committee List**

- **Curriculum Committee (includes 2 student positions)** – ideally involves one first-year foundational student and one second-year foundational or advanced track student. Students help with aspects such as getting student feedback of desired electives/spring & summer courses. They represent the student body in evaluating curriculum. The committee meets monthly between September and May.
- **Field Education Committee (includes 2 student positions)** - ideally involves one first-year foundational student and one second-year foundational or advanced track student. The Committee discusses policies and procedures related to field education. Students have opportunities for evaluation of the field education component of the program and further developing the field education network. The Committee meets as needed.
- **Alumni Engagement Committee (includes 1 student position)** – This committee assists in further developing the relationship between the school and our alumni, including organizing events, utilizing Facebook to build connections, and engaging in data collections around our alumni. The Committee meets as needed.
- **Social Work Mental Health Clinic (includes 1 student position)** – Students on this committee must be completing their field education practicum in the Social Work Mental Health Clinic. The Committee discusses policies and procedures, clinic mandate and services, collaboration with the psychology division and other service providers. The Committee meets as needed.
- **Student Recruitment Committee (includes 2 student positions)** - ideally involves one first-year foundational student and one second-year foundational or advanced track student. Students participate in various activities aim to attract students to the MSW program, which may include participation in Information Sessions and mentoring new students before they start the program. The committee meets monthly between September and June.
- **FHSD Student Experience Committee (includes 1 student position)** – One student to represent MSW students on this Faculty of Health and Social Development Committee along with student representatives from the Health and Exercise Science (HES) and the School of Nursing. The committee discusses issues related to the experiences of students at UBC Okanagan in general and of those students in FHSD in particular. The Committee meets once a month between Sept and April.