

**Valparaiso
University
BSW Social Work
Student Handbook**

Revised as of 1-23-25

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----- Introduction -----

Welcome to Valparaiso University Social Work (VUSW) BSW Program! This handbook was designed for BSW majors and minors to be a window into our program. Included within you will find information about our history, our policies and procedures, the opportunities that are open to you through the program, and our hopes and expectations for you. You will notice that we are very specific about what we want you to learn through the VUSW BSW program. We also intentionally plan so you will have many opportunities to direct your own learning and focus on specific populations or aspects of practice that interest you most. BSWs are sought after human service professionals, who are concerned with empowering people to develop capacities and strengths that will enhance social functioning for all. In addition to the BSW degree, Valparaiso University offers a Master of Social Work Degree (MSW) degree. This handbook relates only to the BSW Program.

Social work is more than just an academic major, it is a professional program that trains and prepares students to serve vulnerable populations and change unjust systems to promote wellbeing at all levels of practice. Through this document, you will come to see clearly the type of learning environment we create with our students. Students are active participants in the learning process and they help shape the environment, through their welcoming and collegial style, lived experiences, input, feedback, and suggestions on how we can improve. Students also must be open and humble to learning.

Social workers serve clients in both explicit and implicit ways. Social work students join professionals in working to enhance human wellbeing and meeting basic needs. Furthermore, social workers view clients in their context, striving to understand them based on their history, values, and roles in society. Similarly, we aspire to create a program environment that accounts for context – who you are and where you came from. We engage anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community and practice. We provide both explicit educational experiences and an implicit environment that encourages self-exploration, critical thinking, trust, and advocacy.

This handbook is updated periodically to reflect program changes. The most significant changes updated in this handbook are listed below:

- Handbook has been updated to reflect the **2022 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)**.
- Handbook has been updated related to history of the program, including the creation of the MSW Program.
- The LouJeanne Walton Scholarship process was clarified.
- Handbook has been updated to reflect changes to personnel.
- Handbook is moving toward the language of “practicum” instead of “field” to match trends in social work education.
- Several sections were clarified, although the intent remains the same. These policies include conditional major status (academic and professional), professional behavior, and grievance policies.
- The transfer policy was changed to be more accommodating of transfer students.
- A recommended plan of study and advising section was updated.
- Personnel and building information was updated to reflect current realities.

In general, the language within has been edited or updated in places to match current program practices, but the spirit of many of the sections remain the same. We appreciate your feedback. **Current social work majors should feel free to reach out to the BSW Program Director with questions, clarification questions, or concerns. We are SO glad you are joining us!**

YOUR BSW SOCIAL WORK FACULTY

----- Program History and Overview -----

BSW History

Valparaiso University Social Work (VUSW) was created in 1948 by the request of students, through the support of President O.P. Kretzmann, and as a result of the initiative, effort, and determination of Dr. Margaretta Tangermann. Professor Tangermann, an alumna of the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration and acquaintance of the mother of Social Work, Jane Addams, was well qualified to lead the effort to develop a joint sociology and social work department. She and the social work students founded community programs for local youth, instituted an honors society for female students, and organized professional committees in the region and state that heightened the awareness of social work's mission.

VUSW continued on a trajectory toward independence and professionalism. The department officially separated from Sociology in 1966. Dr. Tangermann continued in her role as chair until 1972. In the years that followed, two significant events in the history of the department occurred. The program attained its initial Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accreditation and Professor LouJeanne Walton joined the faculty.

Professor Walton served as professor and chair of the Social Work Department at Valparaiso University for nearly 35 years. During her tenure at VU, she was the chairperson for the Social Work Department, a recipient of the O.P. Kretzmann Award, and received numerous grant and research accolades. She was also the first Black woman to get tenure at VU, was an advisor to the Black Student Organization (BSO), and served as informal advisor to several students that graduated from social work. Professor Walton served in a variety of other leadership roles, including the President of the Indiana Association of Social Work Educators. Professor Walton was instrumental in cultivating a more supportive environment for students of color on campus. Her efforts were recognized when she received the first Valparaiso University MLK Day Award in 1995. During her tenure as chair, VUSW was first accredited and granted a chapter membership in the Phi Alpha Honor Society, Social Work's national level academic honor society.

In the following decade, the department began a lengthy, on-going process of meaningful self-study and visioning for continuous improvement and adherence to the then newly developed CSWE 2008 Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS). Many departmental transitions also occurred. Long-standing department chair, Professor LouJeanne Walton retired. The successive change and departure of the next department chair, Professor Lorri Glass to Professor Matthew Ringenberg, and the addition of full-time instructors Barb Crumpacker Niedner and Barbara Gaebel-Morgan took place. Finally, the CSWE 2008 shift to competency-based education and assessment pushed the department to articulate more clearly its continuous improvement plans.

In 2013, the department underwent additional changes. Barbara Gaebel-Morgan shifted into semi-retirement, replaced by Professor Jane Barden. Ringenberg began a two-year assignment as Valparaiso University's Cambridge Overseas Study Director, while Barb Crumpacker Niedner served as Acting Chair. During his absence, Pam Saylor and Kendre Israel filled in capably. In 2015, Professor Ringenberg resumed his role as Department Chair. In 2016, Caroline Ban also joined the department as it expanded to four full-time faculty members to keep up with the growing number of majors.

Efforts since 2016 have focused on cultivating a learning environment that supports student exploration and growth, adding program elements that emphasize application of knowledge to practical situations, closely integrating the various program components, growing the program, and providing clearer benchmarks for student achievement. Students can learn more about student organizations and extracurricular opportunities in

the “Studying Social Work” section of this handbook. Faculty and staff members meet regularly to closely coordinate the components of the educational experience and learning environment.

Between 2018 and 2020 more transitions occurred, resulting in changes yet again in personnel. Professor Crumpacker Niedner continued to be the steady presence as the Director of Practicum and remained the unwavering heart and soul of the department. Professor Barden left in 2019 after her tenure application was contentiously denied and Professor and alumna, Rachel Gatlin was hired. Long standing chair, Professor Ringenberg left at the end of June 2020 for a larger BSW/MSW program and Professor of Sociology, Lissa Yogan, then Associate Dean for the College of Arts and Sciences chaired the department.

In early July of 2020, due to university financial constraints, the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that the only tenured member of the department (Professor Ringenberg) had just left, VU Social Work, was reviewed as part of a university discontinuance process. Also, in the summer of 2020, Social Work moved out of its long-time home in Heidbrink Hall to the Arts & Sciences Building, since the university was consolidating buildings to cut costs in the pandemic. The department was challenged, but not thwarted. Professor Crumpacker Niedner led the charge of mobilizing data and information with Professors Ban, Yogan and Gatlin to showcase VUSW’s resiliency and impact on the region. Professor Ban and Crumpacker Niedner initiated the Executive Alumni Advocacy Group with alumna Kendre Israel to advocate for the program. Professor Crumpacker Niedner continued as Director of Practicum and Ban became the new Program Director in the fall of 2020.

What could have been the end of VU Social Work, turned into a point of resiliency. VUSW was able to save the program from discontinuance by gathering strong data, telling our story and lifting up the incredible witness from alumni, students and community members. One-hundred fifty alumni signed up in one week to write letters and make calls as part of the Executive Alumni Advocacy Group. Students created a petition to save the program that gathered over 1,300 signatures. The Faculty senate voted unanimously against recommending social work for discontinuance and this recommendation was accepted by then President Mark Heckler.

After making it through discontinuance, faculty desired to stabilize and rebuild the program. The number of majors had dropped down to about 30 because students were not allowed to declare a major during the discontinuance review process. The Department of Social Work was required to form new alliances with other programs to become a larger department that would be bigger.

Social Work joined with Education to become the Department of Social Work and Education. Within the new unit, Social Work will continue to maintain its unique program identity. Both programs share similar features including a cohort model, student-centered space, accreditation, an Administrative Assistant and internships.. Forming a new unit has resulted in a new move to first Meier Hall in 2022 and then Wesemann Hall in 2023.

New faculty member and alumna Nicole Moy joined the program in 2023. Professor Rachel Gatlin moved back into social work practice in 2024 and was replaced by alumna Bethany Garling-Spychala. The program is currently stable, strong and recent changes mean that Social Work has a fresh opportunity to continue our rich history and commitment to students. As changes in contemporary social work practice emerge, VUSW continues to work to bring program components into alignment as outlined by CSWE and the profession. The BSW program has grown to roughly 45 majors and nearly 25 minors in 2024.

Creation of the MSW Program

In the summer of 2023, Professor Ban intensively led the efforts to start an MSW program with the support of President Jose Padilla and Provost Eric Johnson, and especially Associate Provost Lissa Yogan. This was not a new idea, as faculty from 1994 had proposed this addition. Professor Ringenberg had also proposed the program

before the pandemic, but this effort did not receive support at the time. Professor Ban was once again joined by alumna Kendre Israel in creating the program. Both also led five community and student listening sessions to gather input on the program.

Matthew Ringenberg rejoined the program in the Summer of 2024 as the new MSW Program Director and Barbara Dahl joined the program as Director of Practicum Education. As changes in contemporary social work practice emerge, VUSW is positioned to grow. The Bureau of Labor Statistics anticipates that the profession of social work will grow by 9% over the next several years (2023). The MSW program benefits both programs, as the program offers essentially a 4+1 degree for Valpo students, with a 1-year Advanced Standing MSW Program option. The BSW and MSW faculty frequently cross-teach across the curriculum and work together to support both programs and students, to form a cohesive social work community.

LouJeanne Walton Scholarship

To honor Social Work Professor LouJeanne Walton's legacy, the LouJeanne Walton Scholarship was established in 2019. This Scholarship reflects Professor Walton's commitment to making Valparaiso University and the greater Valparaiso community an equitable place for all people. Students can learn more about LouJeanne's life and work [here](#). This scholarship program is available to full-time, entering freshmen of African-American, Hispanic/LatinX, Native American, Asian-American, or other underrepresented ethnic groups with a 3.0 minimum high school GPA. The BSW Program Director, with input from other faculty, and a representative from the Office of Multicultural Programs, identify and select first year students who meet these qualifications by October 15 each fall. The scholarship amount varies slightly based on interest income but is a one time scholarship that is approximately \$1,500- \$2,000 per student during their first year. Recipients will be expected to write a thank you note to the family and supporters. Details and deadlines will be provided to recipients by the Office of Multicultural Programs.

Students are encouraged to look for other scholarship opportunities on resources such as, <https://go.scholarshipjunkie.com/scholars-corner/>.

Program Overview

Valparaiso University's Bachelor of Social Work Program has been accredited since 1975; one year after such accreditation was available. VUSW currently offers a BSW degree that prepares graduates for generalist practice in social service positions. This professional program is built on a strong liberal arts base and a solid social work curriculum that provides students with foundational knowledge, values, and skills that are transferable to different settings, populations, and social issues. Furthermore, VUSW provides a rigorous and stimulating educational environment characterized by a dynamic interchange between faculty and students that promotes critical thinking, conscious use of self, and active engagement in the learning process.

Students have opportunities for growth both in and out of the classroom. The social work major consists of 45 social work credits and 12 required interdisciplinary course credits (PSY 110, SOC 110, and a 6-credit Stats & Methods sequence). Additionally, co-curricular and extra-curricular learning experiences allow students to apply classroom knowledge to work with people. Such opportunities include, but are not limited to: internships at area social service agencies, cross-cultural interviewing, events to learn about and practice legislative advocacy, and presenting independent research.

Social work majors at Valparaiso University can broaden their learning by pursuing co-curricular plans of a double major or minor that combines their interest in disciplines such as psychology, theology, global service, political science, criminology, sociology, healthcare leadership or world language. In addition, students are

encouraged, if they desire, to engage in off-campus learning experiences, found through the VU Global Education Office. For more information, go to <https://www.valpo.edu/globaleducation/>.

Educationally-directed internships at Valparaiso University set our students apart. This experience fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge and promotes the development of professional competence. Practicum education, the signature pedagogy used in social work, is systematically designed, supervised, coordinated, and evaluated according to stringent criteria established by the CSWE. The educationally directed internship program offers students opportunities for practice in a variety of settings in the northwest Indiana community. Students complete a 100-hour internship in the spring semester of their junior year and a 450-hour internship in the fall and spring semesters of their senior year. VUSW schedules courses primarily on Monday, Wednesdays, and Fridays, leaving Tuesdays and Thursdays open for practicum education.

Graduates from our program are highly marketable. They are employed in child welfare, mental health, schools, hospitals, elder care, churches, shelters, corrections, criminal justice, police social work, and other social service settings. Alumni typically enter graduate school to pursue a Master of Social Work within five years of graduation and are eligible to apply with advanced standing, which gives them credit for courses taken within the BSW curriculum and enables students to get their MSW in as little as one year. Graduates also pursue postgraduate experiences in service through programs such as: The Peace Corps, Lutheran Volunteer Corps, Teach for America, AmeriCorps, Young Adults in Global Mission, Covenant House, and Chicago's Mercy Homes for Boys and Girls.

----- **Mission, Vision & Conceptual Foundation** -----

Mission

Our Social Work program mission grows out of the university mission in that we provide a rigorous and stimulating educational environment characterized by a dynamic interchange between faculty and students. We work with students to promote critical thinking, conscious use of self, and active engagement in the learning process.

Valparaiso University Social Work BSW Mission Statement:

Valparaiso University Social Work (VUSW) BSW Program educates culturally-responsive, strengths-based, system-focused generalist practitioners who seek truth, pursue research-informed practice, promote well-being and equity, value human rights, and act for social justice as they lead and serve at all levels of practice.

The VUSW's mission promotes the purpose of social work as a profession, as defined by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The VUSW mission, university mission and purpose of the profession undergird our program goals and curriculum.

Vision

Our BSW vision fosters the creation of coherent and integrated educational learning experiences. We use an active learner model, valuing different ways of knowing, and aimed at preparing students for professional generalist social work practice that will:

- address the whole person in the context of their environment;

- be informed by an ecological/systems and strengths perspective;
- be actively involved in advocacy, empowerment, and social change;
- serve vulnerable and oppressed people;
- implement culturally sensitive practice strategies; and
- contribute meaningfully to society by valuing service, social and economic justice, the dignity and worth of each person, importance of human relationships, and integrity and competence in all areas of generalist practice.

Valparaiso University Social Work BSW Vision Statement:

Valparaiso University Social Work BSW Program is a community of critical thinkers applying ethical, culturally responsive, generalist social work practice to enhance equity, well-being and social justice.

Program’s Purpose and Primary Goal

The curriculum is designed and organized around one primary goal, namely to educate and prepare students for ethical, effective, and culturally competent generalist social work practice for service in the world.

Purpose

The purpose of the VU Social Work program is to educate and prepare students for ethical, effective, and culturally competent generalist social work practice for service in the world. The program uses a competency-based educational model and outcome performance approach to curriculum and co-curricular design to meet this purpose.

The VUSW mission, vision, primary goal, and broad context of service in church, society and the world, along with the articulated NASW social work core values, all support the profession’s purpose as stated in the CSWE 2022 Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards (EPAS):

“Purpose

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

Values

Service, social justice, the dignity and worth of the person, the importance of human relationships, integrity, competence, human rights, and scientific inquiry are among the core values of social work. These values, along with an anti-racist and anti-oppressive perspective, underpin the explicit and implicit curriculum and frame the profession’s commitment to respect all people and the quest for social, racial, economic, and environmental justice.” (p.14)

As a values-based profession, it is critical that those who pursue an education and career in social work are aware of and ascribe to the core values of the profession as outlined above.

Accreditation

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) is a nationwide organization whose purpose is to accredit baccalaureate and master’s level social work programs. Accreditation means that a social work degree from that

institution is recognized by employers and graduate programs as meeting thresholds that reflect high standards for academic excellence and professional competence.

Most importantly for students and families, accreditation means that our VUSW graduates can apply for Advanced Standing graduate programs and complete their MSW in as little as one year.

Valparaiso University Social Work was first accredited in 1975 and has continuously maintained accreditation ever since. The program reaffirmed its accreditation in 2022. The program prepared for this process by engaging in rigorous self-study, assessment, evaluation, continuous improvement planning, and CSWE site review. The department will submit our next self-study to reaffirm our accreditation in November of 2028 and this will be decided on by the Board of Accreditation in October of 2029.

2022 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards' Competencies

VUSW has selected nine competencies, adopted from the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE's) 2022 Education Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS), that are infused across the curriculum. The competencies act as foundational concepts that guide faculty as they prepare students to develop the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processing necessary for ethical, effective, and culturally relevant entry-level generalist practice. The competencies are:

1. Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
2. Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice
3. Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice
4. Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
5. Engage in Policy Practice
6. Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
7. Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
8. Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities
9. Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

The BSW program is a competency-based curriculum. This means that the competencies are infused throughout the curriculum to support student knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and professional readiness. Students should become familiar with these competencies and will become more acquainted with them during the Junior and Senior Integrative Practicum Seminars. Being able to effectively integrate competencies and knowledge from the classroom into the practicum is central to the VUSW curriculum. BSW students are taught to translate knowledge and values into functional interpersonal and strategic skills and demonstration of cognitive and affective processes. Students are assessed on these competencies through demonstration in practicum and the SWEAP assessment tool prior to graduation. The next page provides a more in-depth view of the 2022 competencies and the necessary knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes that accompany those. Corresponding behaviors, which the program uses to help students articulate their learning plans in practicum, are also listed related to competencies, as developed by Shelagh Larkin in her 2022 text, *A Practicum Guide for Social Workers: An Integrated Approach (2nd edition)*.

**CSWE 2022 Competencies
with Corresponding Knowledge, Values, Skills, Cognitive & Affective Processes
and Behaviors**

CSWE Competency (C)	CSWE Necessary Knowledge, Values, Skills Cognitive & Affective Processes (KVS, CAP)	CSWE Behaviors (B)
1 – Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. 2. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. 3. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers intentionally engage in proactive, holistic self-care. 4. Social workers understand the profession’s history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. 5. Social workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in interprofessional teams. 6. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. 7. Social workers understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context b. Demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication c. Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes d. Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.
2- Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. 2. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. 3. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels b. Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice

	environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected.	
3 – Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. 2. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. 3. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person’s life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. 4. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture’s structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels b. Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences
4 – Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing the science of social work and in evaluating their practice. 2. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. 3. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. 4. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs b. Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work
5 – Engage in Policy Practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. 2. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. 3. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services b. Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, racial,

	<p>they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. 5. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation. 	<p>economic, and environmental justice</p>
<p>6 – Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 2. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. 3. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 4. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. 5. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. 6. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and interprofessional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies b. Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.
<p>7 – Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with and on behalf of diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 2. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 3. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. 4. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of interprofessional collaboration in this process. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies. b. Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan

	5. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment in decision-making.	
8 – Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 2. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 3. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. 4. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing, and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. 5. Social workers value the importance of interprofessional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, interprofessional, and inter-organizational collaboration. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals b. Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.
9 – Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. 2. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. 3. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. 4. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes b. Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

----- Major in Social Work at Valparaiso University -----

Learn more about Valparaiso University Social Work at Valpo online at valpo.edu/socialwork/

****Please note, all official Admission, Retention, Advising, Transfer Credit, Work-Life Credit, and Termination Criteria, Policies, and Procedures may be found in **Appendix A** of this Student Handbook.****

Full-Time BSW Faculty

BSW Program Director/Assistant Professor C. Ban (Department co-chair), MSW, DSW Candidate

Interim Director of Practicum Education/Clinical Assistant Professor, Bethany Garling-Spychala, MSW, LCSW

Clinical Assistant Professor, Nicole Moy, MSW, LSW

Professor Emeritus, Barb Crumpacker Niedner, MSW, LCSW

MSW Faculty members also teach in the BSW curriculum from time to time.

The BSW degree

Valparaiso University Social Work offers the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree. As sought-after human service professionals, social workers seek to promote human and community wellbeing. Social Work is concerned with empowering people to develop capacities and strengths that will enhance social functioning. Our BSW graduates are prepared for generalist social work practice in a wide variety of settings. Alumni of our program are highly marketable and are employed in mental health services, schools, hospitals, elder care, churches, shelters, corrections, child welfare, public safety, government, policy, and other social service agencies.

Valparaiso University's Social Work program is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) which is recognized by the Council for Higher Education as the sole accrediting agency for baccalaureate- and masters-level social work education in the United States.

Our graduates often pursue the Master of Social Work (MSW) degree within five years of earning their BSW and are eligible to apply for advanced standing in many MSW programs. Advanced standing typically offers students who have earned a BSW the opportunity to complete their graduate degree in one year, rather than the typical two years. The vast majority of students in our program pursue a graduate degree after graduation.

University-Level Process

To begin the admissions process, students who wish to major or minor in social work must declare this intention with the University Registrar. First-year students who enter the University with a declared social work major or minor do not need to fill out a form.. Students who wish to major in social work and transfer from either another department or another major must complete a curriculum-change form on the Registrar's website, found at: www.valpo.edu/registrar . Majors should submit this form to the Office of the Registrar no later than September 1st of their junior year.

Social Work Formal Admission for Majors

In addition to the University-level process, all majors must successfully complete the Social Work program's Formal Admission process. Students must follow the program's formal timeline for admission:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
<p>1. Student completes the university process for declaring a social work major</p>	<p>Must be completed no later than September 1st of the junior year.</p> <p><i>This deadline gives the VUSW faculty member serving as the Professional and Academic Advisor a chance to evaluate the student's plan of study, and if needed, advise the student to enroll in all foundation courses prior to the end of the fall semester drop-add period.</i></p>
<p>2. Student completes the VUSW Formal Admission documentation for faculty evaluation.</p>	<p>In order to exhibit professional readiness, forms must be completed within 30 days of declaring a major. Failure to do so may indicate a need for remediation. Forms must be completed no later than September 15th of the junior year.</p> <p><i>This deadline provides enough time for the Director of Practicum Education to be notified about any junior students who seek to join the junior practicum cohort.</i></p>
<p>3. Student completes the VUSW Formal Admission interview and evaluation</p>	<p>Must be completed by September 30th of the junior year.</p> <p><i>This deadline provides sufficient time for the student to be added to the VUSW community email list to further embed the student into the VUSW community. This deadline also provides time for the student to complete documentation and activities related to junior practicum.</i></p>

Criteria for Formal Admission

The criteria for Formal Admission include:

1. Strong desire to serve, while exhibiting signs of professional behavior readiness to promote human and community well-being.
2. Cumulative overall University grade point average of 2.0.
3. Cumulative grade point average of 2.5 in VU Social Work classes.
4. Completion of all documentation included in the Formal Admission materials found on the website at <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/> under the heading of "Formal Admission."
5. Formal interview with a member or members of the social work faculty.

In exceptional circumstances, a student may be admitted to the program without meeting the cumulative overall University and Social Work grade point averages, required in criteria 2 and 3 above, or in cases where a student does not yet exhibit professional readiness. In such circumstances, a student would typically be admitted to the program on Conditional Major Status for academic or professional reasons, and given an opportunity to meet those criteria prior to the end of the first semester of junior year.

For the official Criteria, Policies and Procedures for Admission, please see Appendix A.

Formal Admission Interview

Admission Interview – The student will meet with faculty who will conduct the Formal Admission interview, after students submit all Formal Admission documentation. The Formal Admission interview is designed to further familiarize students with the department, its expectations, its offerings, and the cultural norms within it. If there are concerns about how well the student's academic preparedness, values, and behaviors fit that of the social work profession, this will be addressed at this time, and sometimes a student may begin their major on conditional status. There are four broad content areas discussed during this interview.

- a. **BSW Program Principles** – There are many interrelated principles promoted within VUSW. Three are highlighted in this meeting.
 - i. **First, we are a community that values anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI).** As a unit, we aspire to be a welcoming community, one built on participation, mutual respect, positive regard, and inclusion. With a strong commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression, diversity and non-discrimination, we see systems of inequality and difference as a strength and reason for celebration. Our faculty, students, curriculum, and day-to-day operations are based on the core values and traditions of the social work profession, where people can work and learn without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, disability, socio-economic status, political or sexual orientation, or other status. We support and participate in University and community work that addresses service and advocacy of oppressed populations and the historically marginalized and disadvantaged. We select volunteer activities and practicum sites based on these core premises. We conduct our classroom as "a learning community where students are encouraged to question, to engage, to challenge, to explore, and ultimately, to embark on a rewarding personal and professional journey. This can be done only in an environment where diversity is honored and respected. Diversity of thought. Diversity of background. Diversity of faith." (Emeritus President Mark Heckler) We expect students to join us in building classroom and community responsive to ADEI. As a part of building inclusion all majors are given Wesemann Hall mail slots and alerted to departmental announcements via the community email list. These serve as

our communication link. Students and faculty are expected to engage in events that foster ADEI, and the cohesive development of the department, their class, and both program and cohort ambience.

- ii. **Second, students are introduced to our *Speak Up Policy* and asked to explore their role and responsibility in creating an inclusive and responsive organization.** All are asked to share overt support of each other and directly address one another when issues, concerns, and items of relevance to functioning come to the forefront. Open communication, generous listening, questions and feedback are encouraged and expected.
 - iii. **Third, our program is place of *high expectations that calls for commitment*.** The coursework and practicum experiences are designed to be challenging academically and personally. Students are expected to commit to hard work, and to plan for personal and professional growth and development. Students will received feedback from faculty regularly and are encouraged to engage with faculty to provide feedback. The faculty in turn commits to supporting students throughout these challenges and opportunities.
- b. **Classroom Content and Professional Experiences** – The department strives to provide as many meaningful outside-the-classroom experiences as possible in which students can apply class content, and explore their applicability to practice. A fee is incurred to address costs of extra-curricular programming. These professional experiences include, but are not restricted to, volunteering at a social service agency, a 100 hour practicum in the third year, a 450 hour practicum in the fourth year, planning, conducting, and presenting research, advocating at the state capital, and preparing for the Annual Town Hall event.
 - c. **Social Work Practicum- The Signature Pedagogy of Social Work-** Students complete two educationally directed, supervisor-monitored internships called practicum. Students are encouraged to select a placement for the junior-year practicum that is unfamiliar and will stretch them in some new way. They are encouraged to select a population or setting about which they are passionate for the senior-year practicum. The process of arranging internships is collaborative. Students will complete paperwork that will inform the Director of Practicum Education of their interests and preferences. Once the preliminary arrangements have been made by the Director of Practicum Education, the student interviews with the organization to determine if both parties view it as a good fit for future educational collaboration.
 - d. **Competencies**– Students are introduced to the competencies, following the Council on Social Work Education’s 2022 Education Policy and Accreditation Standards mentioned earlier in this document. These competencies are folded fluidly into the curriculum through knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes in each course as well as summarized and actively integrated by the students through learning plans and reflective learning portfolios they design.

For official policies and procedures regarding Admission, please see Appendix A.

Academic Progression Standards

BSW students must exhibit self-management, humility and openness to feedback, and the knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes of the social work profession. These qualities are measured by a baseline of academic achievement and exhibited professional behavior in order to adequately serve clients in the practicum. In order to remain a social work major and progress through the program, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and a Social Work program grade point average of 2.5. Should a student’s grade point average fall below these requirements at any time, the student will be placed on Conditional Major Status for academic reasons, with a plan, and will be allowed up to December of their junior year to raise their

grade point average to the required standards. Failure to achieve the required grade point averages after this time frame will result in dismissal from the major. Social Work students must also pass all non-elective social work courses, regardless of GPA requirements in order to move forward. Should a social work major earn an F in a course in the social work major, the student may be allowed one chance to retake the course in order to earn a passing grade. Failure to earn a passing grade the second time taking a course will also result in dismissal from the major. More information about Conditional Major Status can be found in the section called, Academic Policies.

There is an expectation that BSW students are able to manage themselves in and outside of the classroom. A pattern of incompletes should be avoided because they may indicate something more than an extenuating circumstance such as a pattern of behavior, which could indicate they are not professionally or academically prepared to progress through the program. Students cannot move forward or continue into practicum with a pending incomplete.

Students must demonstrate the values of the profession as a manifestation of a student's moral compass. Additionally, per Social Work Policy. No student may pass a class who has missed more than 1/4 of the classes. (For example, 10 or more classes for a 3 day a week class.)

For the official policies and procedures referenced in this section, please see Appendix A.

Professional Progression Standards

Once students begin volunteering in SOCW 151, BSW students are representatives of the program and the university in the broader community. As such, in order to remain a social work major and progress through the program into practicum, students must exhibit signs of professional readiness, humility, openness to feedback, and an ability to promote human and community well-being. Professional readiness includes, but is not limited to, content covered in the Formal Admission interview and documentation including the Rubric for Assessing Professional Development, the Personal Statement and the Learning Community Agreement, which can be found on the website at: <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/> under the heading, "Formal Admission." Additionally, email is the preferred method of communication for the program. It is expected that students communicate in a respectful and timely manner, typically within 48 hours during the academic sessions. If students do not meet this component of the Formal Admission criteria at any time related to behavior in or outside of the classroom, the student will be placed on Conditional Major Status (for professional reasons), with a Remediation Plan, and will be allowed up to December of the junior year to exhibit professional readiness based on the completion of a Remediation Plan. It should be noted that in some cases of gross misconduct, students may be exited from the program in lieu of Conditional Major Status. Such cases, the Program Director will communicate with students about the decision, appropriate referral, and opportunity for appeal. Failure to exhibit professional readiness in the opinion of the faculty prior to the end of the Fall semester of the junior year will result in dismissal from the major.

For the official policies and procedures referenced in this section, please see Appendix A.

Major Requirements

The Bachelor in Social Work (BSW) Degree consists of a minimum of 45 credit hours in social work constitutes a major. Courses must include SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, 260, 356, 376, 386, 410, 455, 456, 475, 476, 485, and 486.

Twelve additional credits are also required, including PSY 110, SOC 110, and a statistics and methods sequence

which students can choose either PSY 201 + PSY 202, SOC 319 + SOC 320, or SOCW 365 + SOCW 366 (if offered).

Practicum instruction is required for social work majors enrolled in SOCW 356, 386, 455, 456, 485, and 486. Practicum assignments are concurrently arranged with coursework. Practicum hours are completed on Tuesdays and Thursdays. During the spring semester of the junior year, a large chunk of time (4-5 hours) should be available on Tuesdays and Thursdays for Practicum. During senior year, Practicum assignments are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, typically, from 8:00 am until 5:00 pm, or as agreed to by Practicum student, Director, and placement. To protect the time needed for practicum, no other courses should be scheduled during this time. The internship selection under the guidance of the Director of Practicum Education, must meet with department standards and approval, and consist of 100 hours in the spring semester of junior year and 450 hours total, for the fall and spring semester senior year. Students are required to maintain an overall 2.5 grade point average in required social work courses in order to remain in the major and be able to serve consumers in the practicum placement.

Courses Offered

SOCW 151. Introduction to the Profession of Social Work

Cr. 3. This course introduces students to social work, one of the most dynamic and diverse professions in the public service arena. From a beginning look at its historical roots, to the wide variety of practice arenas, students will gain a preliminary understanding of foundational theory and conceptual materials required for effective generalist practice and essential skills necessary to develop professional and personal success. The course is intended for social work majors, minors, exploratory students and those considering a double major or work in the human service practicum. Twenty hours of out-of-class self-directed learning experiences are required. Fifteen to twenty of the twenty-five hours will be service learning. *Typically taught every semester.*

SOCW 210. Social Welfare Policies: History and Programs

Cr. 3. An overview of the history of social welfare programs in the United States, and the economic, social, and political forces that shape the structure of the American welfare system. Policy issues, including health and mental health services, anti-poverty programs, corrections, housing, employment, children's issues, and human rights, are examined with emphasis on how these policies impact populations at risk. May be used to fulfill the Social Science component of the General Education Requirements. Whenever identified as SOCW 210-WIC fulfills the Writing Intensive Course (WIC) General Education Requirement. *Typically taught every semester.*

SOCW 220. Human Behavior and Social Environment

Cr. 3. An introduction to the study of the interacting forces of biology, psychology, social systems, and cultural variables that affect human development and behavior. General Systems Theory provides the theoretical foundation for the course, which also introduces a variety of other theoretical frameworks that apply to different social groups (friendship, family, organization, community). Gender, race, sexual orientation, and social class issues related to human development and interaction are explored. May be used to fulfill the Social Science component of the General Education Requirements. *Typically taught every semester.*

SOCW 240. Communication and Counseling Skills

Cr. 3. This course is a unique experiential and introductory interviewing course where students critically examine and learn about foundational theory for communication and counseling skills. Additionally, they learn elements of basic counseling theory, the overarching helping process in a multicultural context, and then apply theoretical frameworks in videotaped and cross-cultural exchanges. Built on social work systems theory and the strengths perspectives, students gain experience in applying theory and skills with sensitivity to work with people from diverse backgrounds. The aim is for students to develop beginning level intentional competence as communicators, interviewers, and change agents with client systems. *Typically taught every semester.*

SOCW 260. Diverse Populations: Human Rights & Justice

Cr. 3. This course introduces students to some of the diversity factors by which people self-define or are defined by others. Students will learn social work theories and practices relevant to understanding human diversity and how it is sometimes used as an excuse for oppression, as well as strategies to address human rights and social justice issues involved in such situations. May be used either to fulfill the Cultural Diversity course component or to partially fulfill the Social Science component of the General Education Requirements, but not both. *Typically taught every semester.*

SOCW 290. Topics in Social Work

Cr. 2-3. A study of selected topics reflective of contemporary concerns for the social worker, such as adulthood, women, clinical methods and techniques for helping professions, housing, ethics, substance abuse, juvenile delinquency, and poverty. Listings are announced. May be repeated if topics are different.

*SOCW 291. Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) Trip– **NEW Fall 2025-2026 Catalog***

The Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) trip engages students in experiential learning. Students learn about all types of advocacy and deepen their understanding of the legislative process through an overnight trip to the Indianapolis Statehouse in February. Students discuss social justice issues affecting human well-being and needs. Students will observe the legislature and shadow students in SOCW 456 in meetings with legislators and staffers. *Only offered 1st 7 weeks in the Spring semester. Typically taught annually. Since topics covered in the legislative session changes annually, the course can be repeated as many times as a student likes. All junior students should attend LEAD at least once prior to senior year.*

*SOCW 292. Cross-Cohort Connection and Groups- **NEW Fall 2025-2026 Catalog***

Cr. 1. This course aims to build cross-cohort collaboration and connections within the social work community and develop social work group skills. The theoretical concepts undergirding this course are social work ethics and values, implicit curriculum, and learning communities. Students are asked to consider how their passions may align with a calling in social work or other helping professions. They are also asked to explore 1) ethical components of intentional community, 2) group work as a social work practice, and 3) resiliency planning and self-care as essential for helping professionals. This course is open to all social work majors, minors, and interested students but is specifically designed for first through third-year students or fourth-year students who want to focus on vocation. Students will participate in an independent "cross-cohort" group experience with students from SOCW 455. Students will build strong connections to social work professors, learn about student internships, and attend an alumni panel. *This course is only taught fall semester, typically annually. The class typically involves a trip to Hull House, one of the first Settlement Houses and the home to social work pioneer, Jane Addams. For more information, click [here](#).*

SOCW 356. Generalist Practice with Individuals

Cr. 3. An integrated theory and practice course that introduces the planned change process and the Generalist Intervention Model for social work practice. Theories, concepts, and ethical models are presented as a framework for generalist social work intervention at the micro-level. Prerequisites: SOCW 151, SOCW 210, SOCW 220, SOCW 240, and SOCW 260. Corequisite: SOCW 386. *Only taught Spring semester. Required for the Direct Practice minor.*

SOCW 365. Research and Statistics: Methods

Cr. 3. This course covers multiple, interrelated topics necessary to plan an independent research project. These topics include univariate, bivariate, and multivariate statistics, using and interpreting statistical software, researching and writing a literature review, developing a research proposal based on a literature review,

instrument design, research methods planning, and IRB application drafting. Prerequisites: MATH 110, SOCW 151, SOCW 210, SOCW 220, SOCW 240, and SOCW 260. (This course is not offered every year. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor with questions.) *This course can be substituted with SOC 319 or PSY 201. Social work majors are encouraged to take the SOC 319 when SOCW 365 is not offered.*

SOCW 366. Research and Statistics: Implementation

Cr. 3. This course involves application of the previously planned content from SOCW 365. Students will implement the research projects that were planned (proposal, methods, instrumentation, IRB) previously. This includes data collection, data analysis, presentation (oral and poster) preparation and implementation, and research paper writing. May be used to fulfill the Quantitative Analysis component of the General Education Requirements. Prerequisite: SOCW 365. (This course is not offered every year. Students should consult with their Academic Advisor with questions.) *This course can be substituted with SOC 320 or PSY 202. Social work majors are encouraged to take the SOC 320 when SOCW 366 is not offered.*

SOCW 376. Junior Integrative Seminar

Cr. 2. Taken concurrently with SOCW 356 and SOCW 386, students apply frameworks and skills learned to work with real client systems in the agency context of practice. This course provides junior students with an integrative seminar and entry-level practicum experience where they are introduced to the overarching social work core competency educational model and begin to develop a professional social work identity in the delivery of that model. Prerequisites: SOCW 151, SOCW 210, SOCW 220, SOCW 240, and SOCW 260. Corequisites: SOCW 356 and SOCW 386. *Only taught Spring semester.*

SOCW 386. Junior Practicum Experience

Cr. 2. This course represents the entry-level practicum experience portion of the junior social work practice experience. Utilizing the Core Competency Educational Curriculum model, students apply learning to an educationally directed practicum of 100 hours in a community social service setting. Background checks needed. Pre-requisites: SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, and 260. Co-requisites: SOCW 356 and SOCW 376. *Only taught Spring.*

SOCW 390. Advanced Seminar in Social Work

Cr. 2-3. A study of selected topics reflective of contemporary issues of practice methodology in social work, such as family therapy, supervision, community organization, and integrating social work into other practicums. Listings are announced. Junior standing or consent of the Program Director or chair required. May be repeated if topics are different.

SOCW 395. Independent Study

Cr. 1-3. This curricular offering gives students an opportunity to independently examine a topic in depth beyond the traditional social work courses. Credit is based on the anticipated length and rigor of the project. Students are required to be in good standing and have at least a 2.5 grade point average. Students are assigned a faculty mentor for the project based on faculty expertise and workload. Pre-requisite: junior standing and consent of the Program Director/Chair of the department.

SOCW 410. Social Welfare Policy: Analysis and Advocacy

Cr. 3. An intensive study of the contemporary and historical forces that shape social welfare policy in the United States. Particular attention is given to interpreting and applying ethical principles to social policy, analyzing competing vested interests and their influence, and tracing the implementation process. Students collectively advocate for policy change at the state level. Each student selects a specific policy to analyze using course content. Senior standing and Social Work major required, or consent of the Program Director/Chair of the department. *Only taught Fall semester. Required for the Policy Practice Minor. Prerequisite for SOCW 456.*

SOCW 455. Generalist Practice with Families and Groups

Cr. 3. Building upon the knowledge of the Generalist Intervention Model gained in SOCW 356, this course expands the focus of theory and practice to work with families and groups. Students practice engaging, assessing, and intervening at the micro and mezzo level. Senior standing and Social Work major required. Prerequisites: SOCW 356 and SOCW 386. Corequisite: SOCW 485. *Only taught Spring semester. Required for the Direct Practice minor.*

SOCW 456. Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities

Cr. 3. Using knowledge and skills gained in SOCW 356 and SOCW 455, this course extends the focus of theory and practice to work with organizations and communities. This macro-level class is experientially based and entails the planning and execution of projects and events in VUSW, the University, and the city of Valparaiso more broadly. Prerequisite: SOCW 455. Corequisite: SOCW 486. *Only taught Spring semester. Required for the Policy Practice Minor. Prerequisite is SOCW 410.*

SOCW 475. Senior Integrative Seminar I

Cr. 3. This course is the first segment of the senior social work practice sequence where students prepare for competent and effective social work as the beginning generalist practitioners by reflecting upon and integrating course work with the practicum experience. Senior standing and Social Work major are required. Prerequisites: SOCW 356, and SOCW 386. Corequisites: SOCW 455, and SOCW 485. *Only taught Fall semester.*

SOCW 476. Senior Integrative Seminar II

Cr. 3. This course is the continuation of and the final professional foundation course in the senior social work practice sequence where students prepare for competent and effective social work as beginning generalist practitioners by reflecting upon and integrating course work with the practicum experience. Senior standing and Social Work major required. Prerequisites: SOCW 455, and SOCW 485. Corequisite: SOCW 456 and SOCW 486. *Only taught Spring semester.*

SOCW 485. Senior Practicum Experience I

Cr. 4. This course represents the practicum experience portion of the senior social work practice sequence where students prepare for competent and effective social work as beginning generalist practitioners by reflecting upon and integrating course work with the practicum experience. Utilizing the Core Competency Educational Curriculum models, students apply learning to an educationally directed practicum of 225 hours in a community social service setting. Background checks are needed. Senior standing and Social Work major required. Prerequisites: SOCW 356 and SOCW 386. Corequisites: SOCW 455 and SOCW 475. *Only taught Fall semester.*

SOCW 486. Senior Practicum Experience II

Cr. 4. This course is the continuation and final professional foundation course in the senior social work practice sequence where students prepare for competent and effective social work as beginning generalist practitioners by reflecting upon and integrating course work with the practicum experience. Utilizing the Core Competency Educational Curriculum model, students apply learning to an educationally directed practicum of 225 hours in a community social service setting. Senior standing and Social Work major required. Prerequisites: SOCW 455 and SOCW 485. Corequisite: SOCW 456 and SOCW 476. *Only taught Spring semester.*

Practicum Education in Social Work

Practicum education in social work sets our BSW graduates apart, as this experience fosters the integration of empirical and practice-based knowledge and promotes the development of professional competence. The practicum component is systematically designed around program educational competencies and is supervised and evaluated according to stringent criteria established by the Council on Social Work Education.

Practicum Education consists of educationally directed internships in a variety of community settings. In order to graduate with the Bachelor of Social Work degree, social work majors are required to successfully complete two internships- a 100-hour Social Work internship in the spring semester of their junior year and a 450-hour internship over the entirety of their senior year. These internships are sequential and must be completed in conjunction with specific coursework.

Transportation to the Practicum Experience

Students are required to secure transportation for practicum. Social work practicum learning experiences may take place all over Northwest Indiana and access to an automobile is strongly recommended. The student intern is responsible for securing reliable transportation to and from the practicum experience. Without access to an automobile, options for practicum placement are available but will be more limited.

Junior Internship Admission & Progression Standards

The first required practicum internship takes place during the spring semester of the junior year. Screening of students for admission to the practicum begins in the fall semester of the junior year. Social work majors must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for placement in a junior internship:

1. Successful completion of the foundation-level social work curriculum which consists of: SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, and 260, prior to entering practicum. (These cannot be taking concurrently or as an independent study.)
2. Current junior standing in the University.
3. Completion of formal entry to the Social Work Program (as described above).
4. Submission of Junior Practicum Education Application e-Admission materials, to be distributed by the director of Practicum Education no later than the fall semester of the junior year.
5. Approval of the social work faculty.

Should a social work major not meet these requirements prior to the beginning of the second semester of the junior year, the student will not be eligible to begin the first required practicum placement. In such a case, the student will be counseled out of the major or must wait until the following spring semester to re-apply for the first required practicum practicum.

Senior Internship Admission & Progression Standards

The second required practicum practicum is completed during both fall and spring semesters of the senior year. In order to be eligible for the senior-level practicum, social work majors must demonstrate the following:

1. Successful completion of all required classes, including a C+ minimum in all Practice-related courses.
2. Satisfactory evaluation of junior practicum internship
3. Completion of the Senior Practicum Education Application which is distributed by the Director of Practicum Education during the spring semester of the junior year
4. Must maintain the academic, behavioral, and professional standards outlined above.

In order to be eligible to remain in the senior-level internship for its entirety, social work majors must maintain the academic, behavioral, and professional standards outlined below in the section labeled, “Eligibility to Remain in Practicum.”

Please see the **BSW Practicum Manual**, for ALL official policies and procedures regarding practicum education. Please contact the Director of Practicum Education for the latest copy of the BSW Practicum Manual.

Eligibility to Remain in Practicum

Students must meet the following standards in order to remain eligible to participate in the practicum education component of the social work major, whether junior or senior year.

1. Academic:

- a. Meet the standards for academic progression as noted above
- b. Earn at least a C+ in all practice and internship related courses (SOCW 356, 386, 455, 456, 475, 476, 485, & 486)

2. General Behavior:

- a. Behavior in internships and courses conforming to the Social Work Code of Ethics, obtained at: <https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>
- b. Adherence to the Valparaiso University Honor Code and its application as laid out in individual courses
- c. Adherence to federal and state laws

3. Professionalism:

- a. Demonstrate an ability to create a safe emotional environment for clients and fellow students
- b. Respect clients and fellow students, in word and action, as valuable individuals
- c. Seek to build on client and classmate strengths
- d. Seek to learn client and classmates’ vantage points and language used to describe related issues
- e. Learn and adhere to basic classroom and workplace expectations
- f. Resolve differences with clients, agency colleagues, classmates, and faculty assertively and professionally.
- g. Demonstrate an ability to be coachable and receptive to feedback and a willingness to meet with professors to receive corrective feedback.
- h. Respecting the Code of Ethics, recording policies and other policies.
- i. Must be able to meet the essential functions, practicum requirements, of the profession.

Failure to meet these expectations will require either corrective action, dismissal from the practicum internship, or dismissal from the program, depending upon the nature of the problem.

Recording without Permission

Students should not record meetings with faculty members, agency practicum instructors, peers, or others without asking for and receiving their expressed permission. Recording meetings without permission is a violation of professional behavior. Lectures and classroom curricular or extracurricular activities should not be recorded without explicit AARC permission, and then for personal academic use only as explicit stated in an accommodations letter.

Student Fees

As a CSWE accredited program, VU Social Work must ensure that students experience a high-quality program both in and outside of the classroom. The implicit curriculum, practicum education experience, and competency-based education experience required by CSWE accreditation is made possible through the collection of modest annual student fees. Upon entry into the program, all majors are expected to participate in several on and off-campus co-curricular educational events. These hallmark opportunities require collection of an annual fee from each student which is based on a student's year in school and the experiences in which each student is expected to partake for that upcoming year. These comprehensive fees cover costs pertaining to practicum education and required classroom activities and co-curricular events. Currently, these annual fees are set at \$350 each year for junior and senior majors, and \$90 each year for second and first-year majors, and are assessed at the beginning of the school year. The Program Director provides an annual letter to students, and during admissions interviews, informing them of the student fees.

Double Major with Social Work

Some of the great things about Valpo include small class-sizes, and the ability to be involved in many things at the same time, including multiple majors. Because students graduate from VUSW with a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree, students wishing to have a major in addition to social work must declare social work as their first major. Those who desire to enhance their learning by pursuing co-curricular plans of a double major or minor are encouraged to do so. The most common double majors for students in recent years have been Psychology, Sociology/Criminology, Theology, and Spanish.

Study Abroad

VUSW supports students in participating in off-campus study abroad. Students making this plan of action as a means to enhance the educational experience and broaden one's worldview should do so in the fall semester of their junior year, or sooner. Students should meet with their academic advisor to discuss their options and individualized plan of study to determine the most optimal time to travel, as some classes are only offered in particular semesters. Study Abroad involves an application process and applications are usually due for the following semester early on in the preceding semester (For example, February for a Summer or Fall Study Abroad application.) For more information about Study Abroad and for specific deadlines and dates as these may vary, students should contact the VU Global Education Office or go to <https://www.valpo.edu/globaleducation/>.

Graduation

To be eligible for the Bachelor of Social Work degree, a student must complete the prescribed curricula found on the preceding pages. The student must also meet the academic, behavioral, and professional standards stated above and all additional requirements for graduation established by the University. Students must typically apply for graduation no later than the end of September in the year prior to a May graduation. Students graduating in December should contact their advisor or the Office of the Registrar to determine the application deadline. The Office of the Registrar can complete a graduation audit for students to show them if they are on track with meeting graduation requirements. Students with questions should contact their academic advisor.

----- Minor in Social Work -----

Students who are interested in social work but are not pursuing a BSW degree have the option to choose from three minors:

1. **Foundations Minor** (provides practical skills for students going into a service-oriented practicum. Our most flexible minor as all courses are typically taught every semester);
2. **Direct Practice Minor** (provides training and a skill set for students working directly with clients, especially for psychology, nursing, communication, foreign language, education and theology students); and
3. **Policy Practice Minor** (provides advocacy skills training and enables students to practice in real settings, especially for students interested in leadership, advocacy, communications and public policy).

Students who wish to add one of the three specific minors listed above in social work must declare this intention with the University Registrar and are asked to have their picture taken for the minor's board.

Declaring a Social Work Minor

Becoming a minor involves taking 15 credits from a pre-set list of courses found on our website at: <https://www.valpo.edu/socialwork/academics/minor-in-social-work/> . Faculty recommend that students considering a social work minor should complete University-level paperwork as soon as possible, typically by Spring of their junior year as some classes for the Direct Practice and Policy Practice minors are only offered once a year.

Minors are encouraged to reach out to faculty to build a relationship and ask specific advising questions. The social work minor is not accredited and therefore, minors are not required to meet the same academic, behavioral, or professional standards for majors.

Minor Requirements

Minor. A minimum of 15 credit hours in social work constitutes a minor. The program currently offers three distinct minors—Foundations, Direct Practice, and Policy Practice. The following minor options may be found at: <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/minor-in-social-work/> and include:

1) Foundations Minor (Minimum 15 credits)

Enhance any VU degree with a social work foundation minor, providing practical skills for anyone going into a service-oriented practicum.

SOCW 151 Introduction to the Profession of Social Work	3 cr.
SOCW 210 Social Welfare Policy: History and Programs	3 cr.
SOCW 220 Human Behavior and Social Environment	3 cr.
SOCW 240 Communication and Counseling Skills	3 cr.
SOCW 260 Diverse Populations: Human Rights & Justice	3 cr.
SOCW 290 Topics in Social Work	2-3 cr.

This is Social Work's most flexible minor and faculty work with students who need a substitution (such as want to apply credit from SOCW 291 or 292 to fulfill this requirement). Students who need a substitution can submit a course substitution form on the Registrar's website under "forms."

2) Direct Practice Minor (Minimum 15 credits)

Build your skillset working directly with people through a direct practice minor, designed to build your skills with clients. Great for psychology, nursing, communication, foreign language, education and theology students!

SOCW 151 Introduction to the Profession of Social Work	3 cr.
SOCW 220 Human Behavior and Social Environment	3 cr.
SOCW 240 Communication and Counseling Skills	3 cr.
SOCW 356 Generalist Practice with Individuals	3 cr. – Taught Spring only, can take 455 first.
SOCW 455 Generalist Practice with Families and Groups	3 cr. – Taught Fall only

3) Policy Practice Minor (Minimum 15 credits)

Want experience with lobbying and advocacy efforts? The policy practice minor will help you build your advocacy skills and give you the chance to practice them in real settings. Perfect for anyone interested in leadership, advocacy, communications and public policy.

SOCW 151 Introduction to the Profession of Social Work	3 cr.
SOCW 210 Social Welfare Policy: History and Programs	3 cr. –Pre-req for SOCW 410
SOCW 260 Diverse Populations: Human Rights & Justice	3 cr.
SOCW 410 Social Welfare Policy: Analysis and Advocacy	3 cr. – Taught Fall only. Prereq to 456
SOCW 456 Generalist Practices with Organizations & Communities	3 cr. – Taught Spring only.

----- Academic & Professional Advising -----

Academic Advising

All Social Work majors are advised by a full-time faculty or staff member, dedicated to the Social Work program. Minors can reach out to the BSW Program Director at any time for advisement advice. The Program Director, or their designee, also initially advises all transfer students to help with transfer credit articulation.

Academic Advisement is an educational process. Prior to the start of registration for each semester, students will meet with their professional Academic Advisor 1 on 1. As active adult learners, students are expected to arrive for advising having *already prepared a potential schedule*. This means they come with an idea of what courses they are interested in by looking at Course offerings in DataVU Self-Service (found at datavu1@valpo.edu) and online resources ahead of time. Students are asked to bring ideas, questions, and scheduling concerns to their session. As students become increasingly more self-directed in using online tools for selecting courses with the following priorities in mind, the academic advisor will work with students to help guide them to:

1. complete major requirements;
2. complete minor requirements (referring students to the appropriate advisor outside the department as needed);
3. complete general education requirements;
4. consider additional academic opportunities such as study abroad;
5. be intentional about selecting electives, finding courses that will enhance intellectual development, career prospects, personal growth, or quality of life.

Students must meet with their academic advisors before they are able to register for classes. Students are responsible for clearing any holds on their accounts for financial, medical, or other reasons that may prevent them from registering. Academic advisors are a resource to help, but students are ultimately responsible ensuring that the classes they register for meet their needs and graduation requirements.

Your Academic Advisor is also a resource that can help students develop a plan to help get yourself back on course to academic success if they are falling short of the Social Work Academic Achievement requirements (including, 2.0 for cumulative university GPA and 2.5 for cumulative Social Work GPA).

For the official Policies and Procedures for Academic Advising, please see Appendix A.

Professional Advising

A student's Academic Advisor also serves as the student's formal Professional Adviser. For first- and second-year students, much of the Professional Advising occurs during the Formal Admission interview, through the discussion of the student's Rubric for Assessing Professional Development. Additionally, the Professional Advisor asks students questions about their Personal Statement, to invite a conversation about personalized goals and career interests. Students can initiate professional advising and mentoring at any time by scheduling an appointment with their advisor to talk about future career goals.

During the Formal Admission interview, students are also encouraged to seek out an informal "faculty mentor," who can more organically provide career and professional guidance. Full-time faculty hold at least six office hours per week to meet with students, and faculty are expected to use a portion of this time for student mentoring. Faculty typically will also have a small budget to support student mentoring activities.

The informal “faculty mentor” helps students develop their professional identity formation. Since this is informal, self-guided process, students may work with their mentor on an as-needed basis, but in such a way that the mentor can get to know students well enough to offer both support and suggestions related to professional development. Ideally, students should seek to develop a faculty mentor relationship such that their mentor knows them well enough that they can be in a position to write recommendation letters for future employment or graduate school. Topics to discuss with a faculty mentor may include, but are not limited to: career inquiry, networking, preparation for practicum, career center and post-graduation employment, graduate school application and preparation, self-care and well-being enhancement.

For the official Policies and Procedures for Professional Advising, please see Appendix A.

Academic Planning & DataVU Self-Service

The Academic Plan of Study, a quick reference guide shown on the page that follows, is designed to assist students in scheduling courses and anticipating future schedules.

An electronic, more thorough, time sensitive review of individual student planning and achievement can be accessed online through DataVU Self-Service, the name Valparaiso University has given to the web interface on which students can access all of their records and make requests, including transcript requests. The direct web site is: <https://datavu1.valpo.edu/> . DataVU is designed to help students compare the courses they have taken to their degree requirements, so students know what they still have to complete. A student’s professional Academic Advisor will use DataVU and the Plan of Study on the next page extensively to discuss course selection, scheduling, and off-campus study options with students.

Students are asked to use self-advocacy skills at every step of the way in the advisement process. Students are encouraged to ask themselves: What will I need to learn? What will I need to do? Whom might I need to talk with to assist me in this process?

Social Work Program Excel Spreadsheet Planning Tool

Students will also be given a template for a program specific excel spreadsheet planning tool. Students are asked to add to the excel spreadsheet form created by social work faculty/staff to help them plan for courses and track their progress. Students will be asked to bring a completed form to their Academic Advising meeting. The excel spreadsheet is not an official document, but a supplemental tool to DataVU that helps provide another way to help students plan future courses and track their progress. As always, DataVU is the official source of information for registration and courses.

Helpful and timely academic advising is key to the process of student success. Students should not leave this critical component to the last minute. Advising involves preparatory time, planning, and a solid relationship between the student and their Academic Advisor. The Academic Advisor will most often communicate with students by email. As previously stated, students should plan to meet with their Academic Advisor before registration. If a student does not hear from their Academic Advisor about registration by midterms, they should reach out about scheduling an appointment.

Student responsibility

Students have the ultimate responsibility in determining and registering for courses and meeting all requirements for degree completion. It is a student’s job to:

1. Meet with the advisor as frequently as necessary, at a minimum of once during the advisement period each term, to learn about and develop their individualized plan. (Students cannot register until they complete this step.)
2. Seek sources of information to assist with making life/career decisions.
3. Contact the advisor when confronted with academic problems or challenges that may affect their performance.
4. Be an active, co-creator in the advisee-advisor relationship becoming increasingly self-directing and self-advocating.
5. Come prepared for any advisee-advisor meeting.

The Office of the Registrar

The Office of the Registrar's website also maintains many forms that students will use for changing majors or minors, substituting courses, and many other reasons. Students should become familiar with the forms on the Registrar's website. All academic deadlines for dropping, adding, or withdrawing from a class as well as the final exam schedule is located on the Registrar's website www.valpo.edu/registrar/. When students have questions about their degree or tracking the completion of degree requirements, they should feel empowered to contact the VU Registrar Office registrar@valpo.edu or 219-464-5212.

Please see a sample Social Work Plan of Study on the next page. Since this Plan of Study may vary based on a student's catalog year, they should check with their Academic Advisor to make sure they have the appropriate version.

SOCIAL WORK Plan of Study 2025-2026 Catalog

Name:
Student ID:
Major: SOCIAL WORK
Organization(s):
Athletics:

Christ College:
Hometown:
Student Interest:
Catalog Year: 2025

	Fulfilled by Transfer or AP Credit
	Currently Enrolled in Classes
	Completed
	Unfulfilled Courses
	Course Needs to Be Retaken
	Plan to take upcoming semester

Semester 1	Recommended Semester	Credits	Grade Received
	SOCW 151: Introduction to the Profession of Social Work	3	
	VUE 101: The Valparaiso University Experience: Exploring Values	4	
	SOCW 292: Cross-Cohort Groups and Experience	1	
	XS 101: Wellness & Stress	1	
	PSY 110 and PSY111: General Psychology with lab (Natural Science 1 of 2)	4	
	World Language (4 of 8 credits)	4	
	Total	17	

Semester 2	SOC 110: Introduction to Sociology	3	
	SOCW 291: Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) Trip	1	
	VUE 102: The Valparaiso University Experience: Finding your Voice	4	
	Humanities (Fine & Performing Arts, History, Literature, Philosophy)	3	
	World Language (8 of 8 credits)	4	
	Total	15	

Semester 3	THEO 100: The Christian Tradition	3	
	Natural Science (2 of 2)	4	
	SOCW 210: Social Welfare Policy & Services (Social Science, 1 of 2) (WIC)	3	
	SOCW 220: Human Behavior & Social Environment	3	
	Elective or Minor Requirement	3	
	Total	16	

Semester 4	SOCW 240: Communication & Counseling Skills	3
	SOCW 260: Diverse Populations: Human Rights and Justice (Diversity)	3
	Social Science (2 of 2)	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Total	15
Semester 5	Humanities (Fine & Performing Arts, History, Literature, Philosophy)	3
	PSY 201 or SOC 319 or SOCW 365 (part 1 of 2 of sequence, (Quantitative Analysis)	3
	THEO (upper level)	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements* This is also a good semester to Study Abroad	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Total	15
Semester 6	SOCW 356: Generalist Practice with Individuals & Families	3
	SOCW 376: Junior Integrative Seminar	2
	SOCW 386: Junior Practicum Experience	2
	PSY 202, SOC 320, or SOCW 366 (part 2 of 2 of sequence) (Quantitative Analysis)	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Electives or Minor Requirements	2
	Total	15
Semester 7	SOCW 410: Social Welfare Policy: Analysis and Advocacy	3
	SOCW 455: Generalist Practice with Groups	3
	SOCW 475: Senior Integrative Seminar I	3
	SOCW 485: Senior Practicum Experience I	4
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Total	16
Semester 8	SOCW 456: Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities	3
	SOCW 476: Senior Integrative Seminar II	3
	SOCW 486: Senior Practicum Experience II	4
	Electives or Minor Requirements	2
	Electives or Minor Requirements	3
	Total	15
	Total	124

----- Additional Academic Policies and Procedures -----

Considerations for Completing Curriculum before Spring Junior Year

If you transfer (either from another university or from another major) into the VUSW program during or shortly before the junior year and intend to graduate in four years, it is critical that you consult with your Academic Advisor, and carefully consider the requirements of embarking on this endeavor.

Students may not begin the practicum sequence in the Spring of the junior year until they have successfully completed the foundation courses (SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, 260). If these courses have not been taken before the Fall semester of the junior year, students must take all remaining foundational courses that fall. Typically, these courses will be offered and have openings. However, the VUSW cannot guarantee that places will be available or made available. If, by the time a student is ready to sign up for courses, seats are not available in all necessary courses, that student could only continue in the program by waiting another year to begin the practicum sequence. The foundation courses may not be taken as independent studies. Please note that taking all five foundational courses simultaneously is not ideal nor easy.

Academic Advisor for Transfer Students

The initial Academic and Professional Advisor for all transfer students will typically be the Social Work Program Director or a designee. The Program Director will assist all transfer students with the credit articulation process.

Transfer Credit Policy

The VUSW program *may* offer transfer credit for social work courses taken in programs that are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, if, after being provided with course syllabi, the Program Director determines that the course content is equivalent to the VUSW course that is being replaced. Students *may* be granted transfer credit for select foundation courses as part of a transfer agreement with a non-accredited program if, after being provided with course syllabi and through discussion with the program director, the Program Director determines that the course content is equivalent to the VUSW foundation course that is being replaced and consistent with the 2022 EPAS. Acceptable transfer courses are limited, so it is recommended that students discuss with the Program Director. Students can find forms for transfer credit on the Registrar's website at www.valpo.edu/registrar/forms. Any questions regarding transfer credit can be addressed to the Program Director.

For the official Transfer Credit policy and procedures, see Appendix A.

Work for Credit Policy

Valparaiso University Social Work does not grant course credit for life experiences or previous work experience. While such experience is often valuable, it does not replace coursework or educationally supervised internships that occur concurrently with coursework.

For the official Work for Credit policy and procedures, see Appendix A.

Incomplete Grades

The grade "I" (incomplete) may, at the discretion of the instructor, be given to a student when all three of the following conditions are true:

1. The work completed in the course so far is passing.
2. The student has been unable to complete the remaining work in the course because of circumstances beyond his or her control.
3. There is not a pattern of incomplete work, which could be an indication of a student's inability to manage school responsibilities.

An "I" (incomplete) received in one semester or summer session must be removed by the beginning of the official examination period of the next succeeding semester or it automatically becomes a grade of IF (Incomplete - Failure). The student's deadline for submitting the outstanding work to the instructor shall be one week before that date. No Semester Honors will be given if the student received a grade of Incomplete at the official end of the semester concerned. (see the University Catalog).

Please note, incomplete grades are not given for students entering or continuing practicum because students need to be in good academic standing in order to progress into practicum. Incomplete grades in any social work course are also avoided after Fall of junior year because most courses are sequential and a student may not be able to graduate on time if they do not finish coursework when the semester concludes.

Conditional Major Status

Valparaiso University Social Work majors may, at any point in their academic career, be placed on *Conditional Major Status* within the program. *Conditional Major Status* means that the student has one or more areas that require sufficient improvement (as determined by the consensus of the faculty) in order to graduate. This may be done at the point at which a student enters the program (see Formal Admission Policy) or at any time, the faculty determines that conditions need to be placed on the student as a social work major. Two categories of behavior can lead to *Conditional Major Status*:

1. Academic. Students whose overall GPA falls below 2.0 or 2.5 within the major, or who fail any required social work course will be considered to be in Conditional Academic Status.
2. Professional. Students who do not yet exhibit professional readiness or demonstrate a pattern of failure to meet basic professional standards will be placed on Conditional Professional Status. Examples of behaviors that may lead to this status include, but are not limited to:
 - a. A demonstrated failure to interact effectively with clients through disregarding client communication or professional/client boundaries.
 - b. Disregarding professional ethics. For example, insulting clients, community members, or otherwise showing disrespect to clients or co-workers.
 - c. A demonstrated pattern of failure to use critical thinking skills in selecting how to work effectively within an agency or intervene with clients.
 - d. Disregarding dress code for the specific setting. This could include professional attire that is either provocative or not fitting for the setting as deemed by the Director of Practicum and agency supervisor.
 - e. A demonstrated pattern of failing to communicate professionally. An example could include a pattern of not responding to email communication within 48 hours during the academic schedule since email is the preferred method of communication for the program. It is expected that students communicate in a respectful manner.

- f. Any behavior that clearly violates the standards and/or ethics of the profession but does not meet the criteria for immediate dismissal from the program. An example may include intentionally cheating on academic assignments, though each violation is judged on a case by case basis.

If a student is placed on Conditional Major Status, a specified Remediation Plan with an overall goal (e.g., increasing one's overall GPA to a specified level for an academic reason) will be identified by the faculty. Objectives and an action plan will be developed jointly by faculty and the student. A time frame for achievement of the goal may be specified and a follow-up date will be set to reassess progress. One faculty member will be assigned as the liaison to the student. Future follow-up dates may be set as needed. The role of the Social Work program is to assist the student in accomplishing the goal, though responsibility for successful completion of the plan rests on the student. If sufficient improvement is not made within the specified time listed in the plan, the student may be declared to no longer be a social work major. Additionally, in rare cases of gross misconduct, a student could be exited from the program in lieu of Conditional Major Status or a Remediation Plan, if in the opinion of the faculty, a Remediation plan will not satisfactorily address the issue. Faculty will offer to facilitate the process to a new major, or if time does not permit in the student's academic career, an individualized major. The final authority in approving an individualized major belongs to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Students may appeal any decision, and those interested in doing so should contact the Program Director.

For the official policies and procedures regarding termination and appeal, please see Appendix A.

Withdrawal from Courses

Authorized withdrawal from a course or from the University must occur within the University published deadlines. The University gives the grade of W to each withdrawn course. This mark carries no credit (see the University Catalog). Those dates are published within the university catalog each year and can be on the Registrar's calendar, found at www.valpo.edu/registrar.

---- Organizations, Student Organizing, & Assessment---

Student Social Work Organization

Springing from the National Federation of Student Social Workers, the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO) was founded in 1979. SSWO is a student-led organization that focuses on promoting the values of the social work profession on campus and in the community. SSWO provides students with the opportunity to lead and serve around their interests within the department, on campus, and in the local community. Additionally, as an organization, it represents the voice of the students in formulating and modifying departmental level policies affecting academic and student affairs within the program.

SSWO members embody the six core values of the profession; namely, service, social justice, the dignity and worth of individuals, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. As a group, they have successfully advocated for rights, fundraised, volunteered, educated, and raised awareness for many social problems. Based on the social work philosophy, members are all strong advocates of helping others and improving the lives of all. In the past they have worked to sponsor families in need, mentor children in the northwest Indiana area, educate kids about health, lead MLK Jr. Day focus sessions, advocate for changes in social policy, educate the student body about the needs of others who are disenfranchised or marginalized, and supported other student groups in on-going service project efforts.

The executive committee of SSWO includes the following positions; President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Public Relations. The organization is entirely student directed and run, with a faculty advisor.

We encourage every student to get involved in building community and responding to human need. This organization is *your* organization. For many, it becomes a supportive arena for practicing what you are learning in class. Additionally, your meaningful involvement, organizing, and networking can be something to showcase on the resume you are developing during your college years. More information is available on SSWO's Instagram page or on the What's Up Wesemann posting on the second floor.

For official Policies and Procedures regarding student organizing, please see Appendix A.

The Servant Scholar Award

The purpose of the Servant Scholar Award is to recognize and promote scholastic achievement and service by students in Valpo's undergraduate Social Work program. Graduating social work major seniors who have at least a 3.0 Social Work GPA and 350 hours of service (typically fulfilled by practicum) by the end of Spring Break will receive the Servant Scholar Award, which is signified by graduation cords. Qualifying students are recognized at the annual Town Hall Event in April.

For official Policies and Procedures regarding student organizing, please see Appendix A.

Student Input, Speak Up Policy, & Assessment and Ongoing Program Improvement

VUSW treats student input as a vital and necessary component to our functioning as a healthy system. We overtly invite student feedback on climate, culture, and CSWE ADEI standards through our annual implicit curriculum assessment. Our *Speak Up Policy* encourages students to raise concerns, share feedback, or seek input about any kind of issue that is of personal or VUSW communal importance at any time. It is both an invitation and a request for you to raise questions and give pertinent feedback to any faculty or staff person in the Social Work program. It is our commitment to you that matters will be taken seriously and handled sensitively. The intended purpose of this policy is to improve overall functioning of VUSW and foster development around assertion, self-care, and cause advocacy. The policy aims to assist all in addressing issues in a timely and proactive manner, improving morale, and fostering an atmosphere of mutual trust.

Additionally, our student-facilitated annual *Town Hall* event is designed specifically and explicitly to elicit ideas regarding the program. It is planned by senior social work majors with guidance from VUSW faculty, embedded in SOCW 456: Generalist Practice with Organizations & Communities. Planning includes surveying students, conducting statistical analysis, designing and presenting the results, leading brainstorming sessions on the day of the event, presenting suggestions to the faculty, planning logistics, and providing voice for the *Student Social Work Organization*.

The topic for the survey is decided upon jointly by faculty and senior students in a collaborative process. It must focus on some aspect of continuous improvement related to the implicit curriculum (what happens outside of the classroom and ADEI) of the Social Work program and be specific enough to study in some detail. Recent topics have included: awareness about and visibility of the VUSW among the

student body; space, diversity, faculty and culture, and student understanding of self-care. Few, if any other university academic department require, expect, or solicit this type of input around program functioning or curricular designs.

CSWE requires that we provide on-going evidence of data collection and analysis to affirm and/or make changes in the explicit or implicit program curriculum. Through the Agency Practicum Instructor's assessment of students in the practicum and through the SWEAP knowledge exam, students demonstrate benchmark attainment of VUSW's 9 Competencies from the 2022 EPAS.

At the end of the Spring semester each year, the *VUSW Annual Program Review*, faculty systematically reviews all practicum and SWEAP assessment data, Town Hall, CoursEval, other course feedback, and data results, and jointly plan departmental and course changes in response to feedback. A report summarizing the feedback and the changes is generated and shared with the VUSW Advisory Board and students both through direct meetings and the posting of an Annual Report, which can be found at: <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/about/guiding-documents/> under the formal heading called, "Assessments."

For official Policies and Procedures regarding student organizing, please see Appendix A.

VUSW Advisory Council

The Valparaiso University Social Work Advisory Council has five functions, to:

1. Advise the program by reviewing content related to CSWE accreditation, annual program review reports, and generating ideas for on-going and continuous improvement;
2. Assist the Department in networking with community professionals;
3. Identify emerging trends relevant to practice;
4. Address leadership issues related to social service delivery that will impact the education of social work students; and
5. Serve as a source of feedback and recommendation for changes to the explicit or implicit curriculum.

The Advisor Council typically consists of anywhere from 8-15 members serving three-year commitments with an option to be asked to serve consecutive terms in order to provide continuity. Prospective professionals are chosen based on experience and expertise in the practicum of social work, diverse lived experiences and expertise, and ability and availability to work collaboratively. The group meets twice per year by zoom, which enables members to join from across the country.

Council members are annually provided with updates of any relevant CSWE, university, and departmental policy changes. There is no financial reimbursement for serving on the board.

Currently, students do not serve on the council, however, students may recommend any potential professional to serve in this capacity, by providing suggestions to the Program Director. Students may obtain a list of the current Advisory Council members by emailing the Program Director.

---- Space, Extra-Curricular Activities and Implicit Curriculum ----

Student Lounge and Wellness Space

Social Work students have a triangle lounge on the second floor of Wesemann Hall not far from faculty offices where students can work or meet up. The lounge has a bulletin board in the space that can be used to post student or SSWO announcements. Social work Majors also made a wellness room on the 2nd floor where students can go for a low-light, sensory space. Questions or ideas regarding the lounge spaces can be directed to the Administrative Assistant or Program Director.

Social Work Picture Board for Majors

VUSW has created a picture board in the Social Work 2nd floor Triangle lobby area in Wesemann Hall. The purpose of this board is to allow majors to identify each other in order to better facilitate a community atmosphere, student organizing, and to allow new majors to seek out assistance from other students. When students complete the Formal Admission process, they will be informed about the picture board and asked to have their picture taken. This will take place after the Formal Admission interview.

Mailboxes

Majors who complete the Formal Admission Process will receive a mailbox across from the Social Work picture board. While most mail is electronic, either by email or on Canvas, students should check these mailboxes regularly for notifications.

Social Work Picture Board for Minors

VUSW has created a picture board in the Social Work 2nd floor triangle lounge in Wesemann Hall for minors. The purpose of this board is to allow minors to identify each other in order to better facilitate a community atmosphere, student organizing, and to allow new minors to seek out assistance from other students. When students complete the minor Formal Admission Interview/Orientation, they will be informed about the picture board and asked to email a picture.

Junior and Senior Internships Pictures

Each junior and senior will engage in internship. In order to both celebrate their professional activities and educate other students about practicum opportunities; each practicum student will write a brief description about their placement. That description, along with a photo of the student, will be displayed on the wall in Wesemann Hall outside of classroom 134.

Curriculum Library

The second floor Ann Riser curriculum library is designed for Education Majors who would like to check out books for the classroom, but this can also be accessed by Social Work Majors, especially those placed in schools. Social Work majors who would like to check out books from this space should contact Administrative Assistant for the appropriate procedures. There is also a social justice library on the second floor that students can access if they choose.

Seating Areas

Wesemann Hall has various seating areas and lounge chairs sprinkled throughout the building. There are also general student lounge spaces in the building on the first and second floors where students can store food or decompress. Students may use these spaces on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Classroom Spaces

Students are allowed to reserve classroom space for student events, provided that there is no prior conflict. Students wishing to reserve a classroom space should contact the Administrative Assistant.

Annual Town Hall Meeting

Each Spring, senior students in SOCW 456 organize an annual Town Hall style meeting for the entire department to discuss concerns and areas for improvement. This event historically has occurred in early April. As part of this event, students assess peers using a survey and evaluate the program's implicit curriculum. Students present findings from the survey and engage the larger Social Work community discussion regarding possible improvements and recommendations to implicit curriculum to improve the program. This event is open to all majors and minors.

Annual Legislative Education Advocacy Day (LEAD) Trip

This program-wide LEAD, overnight trip to Indianapolis annually in February gives students a real-live experience advocating at the state-legislature. Planned by senior students as part of SOCW 456, this trip is free to majors, and available to minors and non-majors at a reduced price. This trip is required for senior social work majors and is strongly encouraged for all junior majors. Professional dress is expected and the free clothing closet may be a resource.

Professional Clothing Closet

The program has a free professional clothing closet on the 2nd floor of Wesemann by the Social work triangle lounge. The closet is staffed by a student aide and hours change by semester, but are usually open on Mondays for 3-4 hours or by appointment. Any student is welcome to access free professional clothing. More details can be found in the triangle lounge or contact the Administrative Assistant.

Agency Practicum Instructor Thank You Luncheon

Junior and Senior students will have the opportunity to celebrate their practicum accomplishments and thank agency practicum instructors at the conclusion of the Spring semester. Agency Practicum Instructors are not financially compensated, so this is one-way students show their appreciation. Professional dress is expected.

SOURCE Research Conference

At the end of the Spring semester, students have an opportunity to present their research at SOURCE, VU's undergraduate research conference. Students interested in presenting research should identify a faculty advisor from the Social Work program. Students can also apply for undergraduate research grants through the Committee to Enhance Learning and Teaching (CELT). Interested students should contact their Faculty Advisor/Mentor.

Legacy Projects Showcase

Senior social work majors will have an opportunity to showcase their internship legacy project for faculty and the broader community. A legacy project is a meaningful way that students leave a lasting contribution at their agency.

Social Work Program Graduation Celebration

Senior BSW students will be invited to a graduation event for family and close friends at the conclusion of their BSW education. This event, which is typically held on the Saturday of graduation (before or after, depending on the time of the graduation), celebrates the accomplishments of students. Students are given awards and have a chance to reminisce about their education. Students won't want to miss this personal experience!

Cohort Graduation Pictures

Senior BSW students will be asked to pose for pictures at the Social Work program graduation celebration and directly after graduation. Each BSW cohort will have a graduation photo displayed on the wall in Wesemann Hall outside of classroom 134.

This section is not an exhaustive list of space or programmatic offerings, and is designed to give students a framework for understanding space, extra-curricular, and implicit curriculum within the program.

----- Personnel -----

Full-Time BSW Faculty & Staff Contact Information

Caroline Ban, MSW, DSW Candidate

BSW Program Director

Assistant Professor of Social Work

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DSW Candidate– St. Thomas University in MN, Anticipated May 2026

MSW – Washington University in St. Louis

BA Psychology, Certificate of Advanced Study in Spanish– Carleton College

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MSW Faculty who teach regularly in the BSW program

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MSW Program Director, Associate Professor of Social Work

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Barbara Dahl, MSW, LCSW
MSW Director of Practicum Education
barbara.dahl@valpo.edu

For Adjunct Faculty, please see our website at www.valpo.edu/socialwork

----- University Support Services & Resources -----

Academic Success Center

Christopher Center Library, 100A
Academic.Success@valpo.edu
Phone: 219.464.5985, <http://www.valpo.edu/academicsuccess/>

Access and Accommodations Resource Center

Students with a documented disability who feel they might need academic accommodations are encouraged to contact the Access and Accommodations Resource Center. Because the BSW is a professional degree, students must be able to meet essential functions of the profession.
Phone: 219.464.5206, <https://www.valpo.edu/access-and-accommodations-resource-center/>

APA Writing Guide

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Canvas

canvas.valpo.edu

Career Center @ VU

<http://www.valpo.edu/careercenter/>

Counseling Services @ VU

1602 LaPorte Avenue
Phone: 219.464.5002, <http://www.valpo.edu/counseling/>

Information Technology / Help Desk

IT.Helpdesk@valpo.edu
Phone: 219.464.5678

Library Support

The Christopher Center for Library and Informational Services is open extensive hours during the school year. During the Fall and Spring semesters, with the exception of holidays and vacation periods, daily hours are:

Monday-Thursday	7:30 a.m. to midnight
Friday	7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
Sunday	noon to midnight

Social Work's library liaison, Alison Downey, can be reached at:
219.464.6183 or at Alison.Downey@valpo.edu

<https://library.valpo.edu/>

NASW Code of Ethics

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>

Student Social Work Organization

Instagram - SSWO (STUDENT SOCIAL WORK ORGANIZATION)

<https://www.instagram.com/valposocialwork/>

Technology Tutorials: www.lynda.com is a university-provided online library of high-quality instructional videos produced by recognized industry experts. It provides training on a wide range of software, computing, and professional skills. This is an excellent resource to use if you are unfamiliar with programs or software features needed for class. Accounts for all students already exist and use the same login information as other Valpo websites. To begin using the lynda.com Online Training Library, simply activate your profile by clicking on this link: <https://apps.valpo.edu/authentication/lynda/>

What do Social Workers do? Watch: On Any Given Day

<http://www.socialworkers.org/pressroom/events/anyGivenDay1007/>

Writing Center @ VU

Phone: 219.464.5216

Website: <http://valpo.mywconline.com/>

-----Valparaiso University BSW Student Code of Conduct-----

-----Agreement-----

Social Work students will adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics standards for professional behavior. Prior to Formal Admission and again prior to practicum placement, students will review the entire NASW Code of Ethics, and sign the Code of Conduct Agreement indicating an understanding of and commitment to adherence.

If at any time during the Practicum Education Experience a student is in a situation where there are questions or concerns regarding potential ethical issues or a dilemma, they should contact the Agency Practicum (Field) Instructor or Director of Practicum for clarification and consultation.

NOTE: Ethical violations related to practicum placement/expected standards for practice related courses can/may result in dismissal from the placement site and/or failure of the course, dismissal from the program and/or possible legal/civil action.

NASW Code of Ethics

Commitments to Clients (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.01)

In general, clients' interests are primary. However, social workers' responsibility to the larger society or specific legal obligations may on limited occasions supersede the loyalty owed clients, and clients should be so advised. (Examples include when a social worker is required by law to report that a client has abused a child or has threatened to harm self or others.)

Self Determination (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.02)

Social workers respect and promote the right of clients to self-determination and assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals. Social workers may limit clients' right to self-determination when, in the social workers' professional judgment, clients' actions or potential actions pose a serious, foreseeable, and imminent risk to themselves or others.

Conflict of Interest (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.06)

(a) Social workers should be alert to and avoid conflicts of interest that interfere with the exercise of professional discretion and impartial judgment. Social workers should inform clients when a real or potential conflict of interest arises and take reasonable steps to resolve the issue in a manner that makes the clients' interests primary and protects clients' interests to the greatest extent possible. In some cases, protecting clients' interests may require termination of the professional relationship with proper referral of the client.

(b) Social workers should not take unfair advantage of any professional relationship or exploit others to further their personal, religious, political, or business interests.

(c) Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships with clients or former clients in which there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. In instances when dual or multiple relationships are unavoidable, social workers should take steps to protect clients and are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries. (Dual or multiple relationships occur when social workers relate to clients in more than one relationship, whether professional, social, or business. Dual or multiple relationships can occur simultaneously or consecutively.)

(d) When social workers provide services to two or more people who have a relationship with each other (for example, couples, family members), social workers should clarify with all parties which individuals will be considered clients and the nature of social workers' professional obligations to the various individuals who are receiving services. Social workers who anticipate a conflict of interest among the individuals receiving services or who anticipate having to perform in potentially conflicting roles (for example, when a social worker is asked to testify in a child custody dispute or divorce proceedings involving clients) should clarify their role with the parties involved and take appropriate action to minimize any conflict of interest.

Privacy and Confidentiality (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.07)

(a) Social workers should respect clients' right to privacy. Social workers should not solicit private information from clients unless it is essential to providing services or conducting social work evaluation or research. Once private information is shared, standards of confidentiality apply.

(b) Social workers may disclose confidential information when appropriate with valid consent from a client or a person legally authorized to consent on behalf of a client.

(c) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of all information obtained in the course of professional service, except for compelling professional reasons. The general expectation that social workers will keep information confidential does not apply when disclosure is necessary to prevent serious, foreseeable, and imminent harm to a client or other identifiable person. In all instances, social workers should disclose the least amount of confidential information necessary to achieve the desired purpose; only information that is directly relevant to the purpose for which the disclosure is made should be revealed.

(d) Social workers should inform clients, to the extent possible, about the disclosure of confidential information and the potential consequences, when feasible before the disclosure is made. This applies whether social workers disclose confidential information on the basis of a legal requirement or client consent.

(e) Social workers should discuss with clients and other interested parties the nature of confidentiality and limitations of clients' right to confidentiality. Social workers should review with clients circumstances where confidential information may be requested and where disclosure of confidential information may be legally required. This discussion should occur as soon as possible in the social worker-client relationship and as needed throughout the course of the relationship.

(f) When social workers provide counseling services to families, couples, or groups, social workers should seek agreement among the parties involved concerning each individual's right to confidentiality and obligation to preserve the confidentiality of information shared by others. Social workers should inform

participants in family, couples, or group counseling that social workers cannot guarantee that all participants will honor such agreements.

(g) Social workers should inform clients involved in family, couples, marital, or group counseling of the social worker's, employer's, and agency's policy concerning the social worker's disclosure of confidential information among the parties involved in the counseling.

(h) Social workers should not disclose confidential information to third-party payers unless clients have authorized such disclosure.

(i) Social workers should not discuss confidential information in any setting unless privacy can be ensured. Social workers should not discuss confidential information in public or semipublic areas such as hallways, waiting rooms, elevators, and restaurants.

(j) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients during legal proceedings to the extent permitted by law. When a court of law or other legally authorized body orders social workers to disclose confidential or privileged information without a client's consent and such disclosure could cause harm to the client, social workers should request that the court withdraw the order or limit the order as narrowly as possible or maintain the records under seal, unavailable for public inspection.

(k) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients when responding to requests from members of the media.

(l) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of clients' written and electronic records and other sensitive information. Social workers should take reasonable steps to ensure that clients' records are stored in a secure location and that clients' records are not available to others who are not authorized to have access.

(m) Social workers should take precautions to ensure and maintain the confidentiality of information transmitted to other parties through the use of computers, electronic mail, facsimile machines, telephones and telephone answering machines, and other electronic or computer technology. Disclosure of identifying information should be avoided whenever possible.

(n) Social workers should transfer or dispose of clients' records in a manner that protects clients' confidentiality and is consistent with state statutes governing records and social work licensure.

(o) Social workers should take reasonable precautions to protect client confidentiality in the event of the social worker's termination of practice, incapacitation, or death.

(p) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients for teaching or training purposes unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information.

(q) Social workers should not disclose identifying information when discussing clients with consultants unless the client has consented to disclosure of confidential information or there is a compelling need for such disclosure.

(r) Social workers should protect the confidentiality of deceased clients consistent with the preceding standards.

Sexual Relationships (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.09)

(a) Social workers should under no circumstances engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with current clients, whether such contact is consensual or forced.

(b) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a close personal relationship when there is a risk of exploitation or potential harm to the client. Sexual activity or sexual contact with clients' relatives or other individuals with whom clients maintain a personal relationship has the potential to be harmful to the client and may make it difficult for the social worker and client to maintain appropriate professional boundaries. Social workers—not their clients, their clients' relatives, or other individuals with whom the client maintains a personal relationship—assume the full burden for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries.

(c) Social workers should not engage in sexual activities or sexual contact with former clients because of the potential for harm to the client. If social workers engage in conduct contrary to this prohibition or claim that an exception to this prohibition is warranted because of extraordinary circumstances, it is social workers—not their clients—who assume the full burden of demonstrating that the former client has not been exploited, coerced, or manipulated, intentionally or unintentionally.

(d) Social workers should not provide clinical services to individuals with whom they have had a prior sexual relationship. Providing clinical services to a former sexual partner has the potential to be harmful to the individual and is likely to make it difficult for the social worker and individual to maintain appropriate professional boundaries.

Physical Contact (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.10)

Social workers should not engage in physical contact with clients when there is a possibility of psychological harm to the client as a result of the contact (such as cradling or caressing clients). Social workers who engage in appropriate physical contact with clients are responsible for setting clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern such physical contact.

Derogatory Language (NASW Code of Ethics: 1.12)

Social workers should not use derogatory language in their written or verbal communications to or about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients. Social workers should use accurate and respectful language in all communications to and about clients.

Respect (NASW Code of Ethics: 2.01)

(a) Social workers should treat colleagues with respect and should represent accurately and fairly the qualifications, views, and obligations of colleagues.

(b) Social workers should avoid unwarranted negative criticism of colleagues in communications with clients or with other professionals. Unwarranted negative criticism may include demeaning comments that refer to colleagues' level of competence or to individuals' attributes such as race, ethnicity, national origin, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, marital status, political belief, religion, immigration status, and mental or physical disability.

(c) Social workers should cooperate with social work colleagues and with colleagues of other professions when such cooperation serves the well-being of clients.

Private Conduct (NASW Code of Ethics: 4.03)

Social workers should not permit their private conduct to interfere with their ability to fulfill their professional responsibilities.

Dishonesty, Fraud, and Deception (NASW Code of Ethics: 4.04)

Social workers should not participate in, condone, or be associated with dishonesty, fraud, or deception.

Agreement

I understand that as a student concurrently learning in a Practicum Placement setting, I am in a privileged and unique position. I am expected to know and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics.

Printed Student Name: _____

Signature of Student Name: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX A
Valparaiso University BSW Program
Official Criteria, Policies, & Procedures

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Criteria for Formal Admission

VUSW acts as a gatekeeper for the profession and, as such, enacts a Formal Admission process after students are accepted into the university and declare their intention to major in Social Work with the University Registrar. The VUSW Formal Admission process applies to all students, including transfer and international students. **VUSW has five major criteria for admission:**

1. Strong desire to serve while exhibiting signs of professional readiness to promote human and community well-being.
2. Cumulative overall university grade point average of 2.0.
3. Cumulative grade point average of 2.5 for all VU Social Work classes.
4. Completion of all documentation included in the Formal Admission materials found on the website at <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/> under the heading of “Formal Admission.”
5. Formal interview with a member or members of the social work faculty.

A student who does not yet meet all five of these criteria may be admitted to the department with contingencies and a Remediation Plan to address any improvements needed to meet the criteria for admissions. In these cases, students must demonstrate that they meet the five major criteria for admission no later than the end of the Fall semester of the student’s junior year, prior to moving forward into the junior practicum placement to be admitted.

Evaluation of Applications for Formal Admission

Policies:

Students are evaluated on the five criteria for Formal Admission (see section 3.1.1). Faculty evaluate a student's Formal Admission documentation, which must be received prior to the Formal Admission interview. Students must proceed with a Formal Admission interview, in which Faculty evaluate applicants on academic achievement requirements, professional readiness, and fit with department and professional values.

Procedures:

All students who wish to major in social work must do the following:

1) Assert this intention with the University Registrar using a Curriculum Change Form, found on the Registrar's website at: <https://www.valpo.edu/registrar/forms/> under the subtitle of "Change to Program of Study"; and

2) Complete the departmental Formal Admission documentation, found on the VUSW website under the heading, Formal Admission, by clicking here: <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/>.

Evaluation begins after a student both declares intent to major in Social Work with the university registrar and completes Formal Admission documentation. In order for students to stay on track with completion of major requirements, the department follows this timeline for evaluation:

<u>Action</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
1. Student completes the university process for declaring a social work major	Must be completed by September 1st of the junior year. <i>This deadline gives the VUSW faculty member serving as the Professional and Academic Advisor a chance to evaluate the student's plan of study, and if needed, advise the student to enroll in all foundation courses prior to the end of the fall semester drop-add period.</i>
2. Student completes the VUSW Formal Admission documentation for faculty evaluation.	Must be completed by September 15th of the junior year.

	<i>This deadline provides enough time for the Director of Practicum Education to be notified about any junior students who seek to join the junior practicum cohort.</i>
3. Student completes the VUSW Formal Admission interview and evaluation	<p>Must be completed by September 30th of the junior year.</p> <p><i>This deadline provides sufficient time for the student to be added to the VUSW community blackboard site and the VUSW community email list to further embed the student into the VUSW community. This deadline also provides time for the student to complete documentation and activities related to junior practicum.</i></p>

Purpose for Formal Admission Related to Evaluation

The Formal Admission documentation and the subsequent Formal Admission interview process have been designed with three main purposes:

- 1) to begin a formal relationship between students and faculty,
- 2) to educate students about department values and behavioral expectations, and
- 3) to help faculty evaluate and address any concerns about a student’s academic preparedness, values, behaviors and fit with the social work profession.

Selection of Interviewing Faculty Member who will Evaluate Student

Prior to the school year, the Program Director determines which faculty member/s will be assigned to conduct the Formal Admission interviews and who will be advising students, based on anticipated graduation year. The assigned interviewing faculty member is in charge of following the *Evaluation of Applicants for Formal Admission Policy*, inclusive of the evaluation activities that occur prior to and during the Formal Admission interview. (Changes in interviewing faculty member may happen, as needed, with knowledge of the Program Director.)

The Formal Admission Documentation Used for Evaluation

The Formal Admission process is initiated after the student completes and submits all Formal Admission documentation electronically. Once again, all documents can be found on the VUSW website under the heading, “Formal Admission,” by clicking here:

<https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/> . The criteria for Formal Admission are embedded within this documentation. All documents are also saved to a student’s

individual folder, accessible by VUSW faculty and staff in the S://socw/students/studentmasterfiles folder. Formal Admission documentation consists of the following forms:

a) Data Form:

The data form is the first form that explicitly lists the five criteria for Formal Admission to the program. This form consists of information about where the student lives and basic student contact information. The faculty member is looking to make sure information is completely filled out to show professionalism and ability to complete tasks.

b) Personal Statement:

The second form, the Personal Statement, gives the faculty member insight into the student's journey to social work. It asks the student about interest in helping others and what the student sees as their own strengths. The form has a place for students to name and explain any challenges that may emerge for the student as they help others. The faculty reviewer in this case is looking for a few things: 1) Is the student able to see their own strengths? Not being able to comment on their own strengths may indicate a lack of belief in self or a resistance to the theoretical strengths perspective. 2) In the section about challenges, the faculty member is looking to see if there may be any challenges that could indicate poor boundaries, lack of self-care, clash of values with the profession, or growth edges that may need to be addressed prior to or during the interview to determine if the student meets the criteria for Formal Admission.

c) Rubric for Assessing Professional Development:

The Rubric form includes several questions where the student is asked to self-assess their professional behavior, fit with values, alignment with the NASW Code of Ethics and the VUSW's Professional Code of Conduct, use of communication skills, desire for self-improvement, self-awareness, responsiveness to diversity, attendance and punctuality. Students are also informed about the Practicum Experience Travel Policy for junior and senior year. In evaluating this form, the faculty member observes a student's level of self-awareness, and determines if the student exhibits professional readiness. If the student scores a two or below (which refers to "needs improvement") in a majority of the questions or, as deemed by the interviewer, in a significant way, the faculty member will inform the Program Director and ask for consultation for next steps.

d) Learning Community Agreement:

This form asks applicants to commit to contribute to the implicit curriculum of the VUSW. The form also introduces students to the NASW Code of Ethics, by providing a link to the document. Specifically, the form asks, students to agree to the following commitments:

- a. I intend to assume responsibility for my own learning.
- b. I intend to act professionally, responsibly, and ethically which includes becoming familiar with and abiding by the N.A.S.W. Code of Ethics.
- c. I intend to continue to focus on self-awareness and my own growth and development, taking this knowledge regularly to deeper levels.
- d. I intend to work collaboratively with the Social Work Department to enhance my education, Department programming, and address any unmet needs.
- e. I intend to attend department events, provide and receive feedback to improve the department and myself, and actively participate in creating a welcoming and inclusive culture

The faculty reviewer looks for compliance. If a student does not complete this form, or any of the forms, the student will not move forward to a Formal Admission interview.

Evaluation of Applicants for Formal Admission

Once all four Formal Admission documentation forms are fully completed and received, the lead interviewing faculty member will follow these next steps:

1. Prior to the Formal Admission Interview:

The assigned faculty member will review the student's Formal Admission documentation for goodness of fit with VUSW's five criteria for Formal Admission. Concerns will be noted prior to the interview, to be shared with the student. In exceptional circumstances, the VUSW may determine to delay or not to proceed with an interview due to a student's documented ill-fit with the program's criteria for admission. In such a circumstance, the student will receive an email with the formal reason/s for not proceeding with the interview and information about appeal, referral and/or next steps.

2. Scheduling a Formal Admission Interview to Continue Student Evaluation:

After reviewing the Formal Admission documentation and determining to move forward with an interview, the interviewing faculty member will initiate an email to the student with a request to collaboratively schedule the student's Formal Admission interview.

3. During the Formal Admission Interview:

The VUSW will welcome and engage the student in conversation about the student's Formal Admission documentation and the values and expectations of VUSW. The VUSW will

communicate any concerns with the student's Formal Admission documentation. The interviewing faculty member will verify that the student meets the following VUSW policies:

1) *Foundation Curriculum Policy*

Students who wish to earn their BSW, must complete the foundational social work curriculum (SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, and 260) prior to the end of the fall of their junior year. The foundational courses must be completed in this time frame so students obtain the required knowledge, value and skills to undertake the professional curriculum, which begins with the first practicum internship in the spring semester of the student's junior year. Students will not be allowed to begin the practicum internship without completing the foundation curriculum. The foundational courses may not be taken as independent studies.

2) *Academic Achievement Policy*

Students must achieve a cumulative minimum 2.0 GPA for Valparaiso University and a cumulative minimum 2.5 Social Work GPA to stay in the major and move forward into junior practicum. Students who do not meet these basic standards for academic achievement may be admitted with contingencies on *Conditional Major Status* prior to the end of the first semester in their junior year with the approval of the Program Director and faculty.

The VUSW will overtly communicate the following policies and evaluate the student's response to these policies. If the VUSW determines that the student's response is not fully aligned with the social work profession, concerns will be directly addressed in the interview.

1) *VUSW Diversity and Inclusion Policy*

The VUSW is a community that values and welcomes inclusion and diversity. As a unit, VUSW aspires to be a welcoming community -- one built on participation, mutual respect, positive regard, and inclusion. With a strong commitment to diversity and non-discrimination, VUSW sees "difference" as a strength and reason for celebration. The faculty, students, curriculum, and day-to-day operations are based on the core values and traditions of the social work profession, where people can work and learn without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, age, gender, ability, socio-economic status, political or sexual orientation, or other statuses. VUSW supports and participates in University and community work that addresses service *to* and advocacy *for* oppressed populations and the historically marginalized and disadvantaged. VUSW selects volunteer activities and practicum practicum sites based on these core premises. VUSW conducts the classroom as a learning community where students are encouraged to question, to engage, to challenge, to explore, and ultimately, to embark on a rewarding personal and professional journey. This can be done only in an environment where diversity is honored and respected. "Diversity of thought. Diversity of background. Diversity of faith," (President Emeritus, Mark Heckler).

2) *VUSW Speak Up Policy*

A student will explore their role and responsibility in creating an inclusive and responsive organization. All are asked to share overt support for each other and to directly address one

another when issues, concerns, and items of relevance to functioning come to the forefront. Open communication, generous listening, questions and feedback are encouraged and expected.

Students who contact any department faculty or staff about becoming a social work major will receive a welcome email that orients them to key people in the department and provides information about the VUSW's Formal Admission process, procedures and hotlinks to required Formal Admission documentation. Specifically, the interviewing faculty member will review all Formal Admission documentation and assess compliance with key VUSW policy, including whether the student meets the:

- 1) *VUSW Foundation Curriculum Policy.* The interviewing faculty member will log onto DataVU (www.datavu.valpo.edu) to find out the student's university designated graduation year. With this information, the faculty member will make a note whether it appears the student will be able to take all five foundation courses (SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240 and 260) before the end of the first semester of their university designated junior year. If not, the faculty member will contact the student by email as soon as possible, to verify the student's anticipated graduation year, and if needed, to explain the policy and to ask the student about their plans.
- 2) *VUSW Academic Achievement Policy.* The interviewing faculty member will log onto DataVU (www.datavu.valpo.edu) to look up the student's cumulative university and Social Work GPA, to determine if the student currently meets the requirements of the *Academic Achievement Policy*.

If the interviewing faculty member becomes aware while assessing compliance with the VUSW policies above or evaluating documentation prior to the interview that the student does not currently meet the five criteria for admission, the faculty member will contact the Program Director with a recommendation and/or ask for consultation. In the vast majority of cases, even where a student may not meet all five criteria for Formal Admission, it is the practice of the VUSW to proceed with Formal Admission interviews, as long as Formal Admission documentation has been fully completed. Proceeding with the interview allows the chance for faculty to communicate with the student and help the student determine their next course of action. In most of these cases, these concerns will be directly addressed in the interview. In some cases, to further evaluate the applicant, the interviewing faculty member may ask the Program Director to sit in or conduct the interview.

Evaluation During the Formal Admission Interview

During the Formal Admission interview, the student will be engaged in conversation regarding their Formal Admission documentation. Any of the Formal Admission documentation that does not meet the quality expectations of faculty will be discussed, and it is possible that the applicant may be asked to revise and resubmit portions of the documentation. (In this case, the student will be notified that

admission to the department would be deferred until the faculty member has received a satisfactory revised submission.)

As noted in the *Evaluation of Applicants for Formal Admission Policy*, faculty will explain the *Foundation Curriculum Policy* and *Academic Achievement Policy*. At this time, the faculty member will note any concerns and engage in a conversation with the student about their situation. When students do not meet the *Academic Achievement Policy*, the faculty member will let the student know that they will be referred to the Program Director for further evaluation (explained further in Compliance Statement 3, *Conditional Major Status Policy*).

Evaluation of VUSW Policies, Opportunities, and Expectations

The interviewing faculty member will communicate VUSW Policies, Opportunities and Expectations in the admissions interview. While most of these items constitute information sharing to help the student better understand the department, the interviewing faculty member may use this information to evaluate any student concerns or challenges. This topic areas include:

- a) High Expectations and Culture of Feedback: The VUSW is a department with high expectations that calls for commitment to hard work, and to plan for personal and professional growth and development. The coursework and internships are designed to be challenging both academically and personally. Faculty, in turn, commit to support students throughout these challenges and opportunities. Because the VUSW is a relatively small department, this commitment is more easily facilitated.
- b) Student Organizing, Extra-Curricular and Professional Experiences: Students are invited to organize around their interests by faculty encouragement to join the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO). The department strives to provide as many meaningful outside-the-classroom experiences as possible in which students can apply class content, competencies, dimensions and behaviors, while exploring their applicability to practice. These professional experiences include, but are not restricted to:
 - Volunteering at a social service agency.
 - 100-hour internship in the junior year.
 - 450-hour internship in the senior year.
 - Supporting multicultural interviewing partners.
 - Planning, conducting, and presenting original research.
 - Advocating at the state capitol.
 - Preparing for the Annual Department-Wide Town Hall Meeting.
- c) Internships—The Social Work Practicum Experience - Students complete two educationally-directed, supervisor-monitored internships. Students are encouraged to select a placement for the third-year internship that is unfamiliar and will stretch them in some new way. They are then encouraged to select a population or setting about which they are passionate for their fourth-year placement. The process of arranging internships is collaborative. The student

completes documentation that will inform the Director of Practicum Education's work in arranging the internship. Once the preliminary arrangements have been made by the Director of Practicum Education, the student interviews with the host organization to determine if both parties view it as a good fit for educational collaboration.

- d) Competencies – The CSWE Social Work Competencies established by the 2022 Education Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS) mentioned earlier in this document are introduced to the student. Students are told that competencies are folded fluidly into the curriculum in each course, as well as summarized and actively integrated by the students through their learning plans and reflective learning portfolios.
- e) Timeline and Advising—The timeline for completion of the Social Work Major is highly dependent on curriculum sequencing. Students who wish to earn a BSW in four years must complete the foundational social work curriculum (SOCW 151, 210, 220, 240, and 260) prior to the end of the fall semester of their junior year. Faculty will have shared the *Foundation Curriculum Policy* (see self-study, section 3.2.1) with students. Students are encouraged to seek out their Professional and Academic Advisor to create a plan for completion of the major.
- f) Special Considerations Regarding Curriculum Sequencing – Any student joining the program between the second and third years must take all remaining foundational courses in the fall of the third year. Typically, these courses will be offered and have openings most semesters (though the VUSW does not guarantee that all foundation courses will be offered every semester or that openings will be available). If, by the time a student is ready to sign up for courses, seats are not available in all necessary courses, that student could only continue in the program by waiting another year to begin the practicum sequence. Students are also told that taking all five foundational courses simultaneously is not ideal nor easy. Students who transfer (either from another university or from another major) into the VUSW and intend to graduate in four years, will be urged to quickly consult their social work Professional and Academic Advisor, and carefully consider the requirements and demands of embarking on this endeavor.
- g) The VUSW Student Handbook—Students are given a copy of the VUSW Student Handbook in their admissions interview, and are shown where to find key policies, and it will be posted on the website. In the event that the Student Handbook is being revised, students will be informed of any key policies and receive a copy within a week of the new Student Handbook becoming available.
- h) Faculty will explain and overtly ask for student thoughts about the *VUSW Diversity and Inclusion Policy* and the *VUSW Speak Up Policy*. Students are specifically asked about their specific views on these policies, as a way for VUSW faculty to evaluate consistency with values, behaviors and fit with the social work major. If a student shares information that directly contradicts any of the policies or does not exhibit goodness of fit with the profession, the interviewing faculty member will let the student know why that viewpoint contradicts with the profession.

After explaining each of the VUSW Policies, Opportunities or Expectations (items a-h above), the interviewing faculty member will ask the student to respond to the information and will invite the student to share any questions or concerns. The faculty member will use these questions or comments to engage in further conversation and to evaluate the student's fit with the VUSW criteria for Formal Admission.

Exceptional Circumstances Where Evaluation Delays or Prevents a Formal Admission Interview

In some cases, additional information, such as behaviors observed in or outside of the classroom may provide insight about a student's professional readiness or lack thereof to meet the five criteria for Formal Admission. Such observations may help the faculty reviewer more accurately evaluate the Rubric for Assessing Professional Development, the Personal Statement, and/or the Learning Community Form. In cases, an interviewer may suspect that a student is not forthcoming or honest about challenges or conflicts, the faculty interviewer may recommend a pause to the Formal Admission process to the Program Director, to wait for additional information. It is up to the Program Director to make the final determination about the delay or halting of any Admission Interview. In these cases, the Program Director will nearly always consult with the VUSW full-time faculty first or adjunct faculty members, as determined by the Program Director. In exceptional circumstances, the VUSW may delay or determine not to proceed with an interview due to a student's documented ill-fit with the program's criteria for admission. In such a circumstance, the Program Director will email the student with a formal reason for not proceeding with the interview and provide information about appeal, referral and/or next steps.

Evaluation Related to Ill-Fit with VUSW Policies, Program or Social Work Profession

In cases where, in the opinion of the interviewing faculty member, the student's viewpoints are very contradictory to the VUSW policies or the Social Work profession, if the student has serious concerns with any of the above mentioned VUSW Policies, Opportunities, or Expectations, or the student seems unaware of the illness of fit of their comments with the Social Work profession, the interviewing faculty member will refer the student to have further conversation with the Program Director before completing the Formal Admission process. The faculty member will communicate this referral in lieu of congratulating the student on Formal Admission. The faculty member will provide an email referral to connect the student to the Program Director for further evaluation. If the Program Director agrees that the student does not meet the VUSW criteria for Formal Admission, the Program Director may decide whether to offer the student Formal Admission with contingency. It is the practice of the VUSW that in most cases, the Program Director will offer the student Formal Admission with contingency. (This is explained further below, in item 3).

Notifying Applicants of the Admission Decision

Policies:

At the conclusion of the Formal Admission interview, the student will be verbally notified of their acceptance into the program, provided all criteria for admission are met.

Procedures:

At the conclusion of the Formal Admission interview, the interviewing faculty member will notify the student of Formal Admission into the department, provided that any identified concerns are addressed satisfactorily in the interview. The student will receive their first social work “swag” at this time, and the interviewing faculty will take the student’s picture. The faculty member will email the picture to the administrative staff so that staff can post the student picture on the major’s cohort bulletin board. Staff will also add the student to the Social Work Community blackboard site and the Social Work Community email list. It is the practice of the VUSW to accept all students who successfully complete the Formal Admission documentation and Formal Admission interview, as long as the five criteria for Formal Admission are met. If a student is on conditional status for academic or professional reasons, they will be notified at this time.

Notifying Applicants of Any Contingent Conditions Associated with Admission

Policies:

The VUSW will notify applicants of the admission decisions, as well as any contingent conditions of their enrollment.

A student *may* be notified that they are admitted with contingent conditions to the department in cases where they do not currently meet the five major criteria for Formal Admission, under the department's *Conditional Major Status Policy*. Any student on Conditional Major Status will have a Remediation Plan, which serves as the formal document to notify the student of any contingent conditions associated with Formal Admission.

Conditional Major Status Policy

Students declaring their intent with the Valparaiso University registrar of their desire to be a Social Work majors may, at any point in their academic career, be placed on Conditional Major Status within the department. Conditional Major Status means that the student has one or more areas that require sufficient improvement, as determined by the faculty, in order to successfully move forward in the major. This may be done at the point at which a student seeks Formal Admission with the department or at any time the faculty determines that conditions need to be placed on the student as a social work major.

Two categories of behavior can lead to Conditional Major Status:

- 1) **Academic:** Students whose cumulative GPA falls below 2.0, whose major GPA falls below 2.5, or who fail any required social work course will be considered to be on Conditional Academic Status. Students who fail any course the first time will be on Conditional Major Status and any student who fails the same class twice will be dismissed from the major. Students who receive a grade lower than C+ in a practicum/practice related course or students who fail any social work course and are granted permission to return the following year to retake the course, will also be considered to be in Conditional Academic Status.
- 2) **Professional:** Students who demonstrate a pattern or significant instance of failure to meet basic professional standards will be placed on Conditional Professional Status. This is especially pertinent once the student is placed at internship, but could occur prior to internship. Examples of behaviors that may lead to this status include, but are not limited to:
 1. Demonstrated failure to interact effectively with clients through disregarding client communication or professional/client boundaries.
 2. Disregard of professional ethics (for example, insulting clients or otherwise showing disrespect to clients or co-workers).
 3. Demonstrated pattern of failure to use critical thinking skills in selecting how to work effectively within an agency or intervene with clients.

4. Disregard of dress code for the specific setting (which could include professional attire that is either provocative or not fitting for the setting as deemed by the Director of Practicum and agency supervisor).
5. General Misconduct. Conditional Professional Conduct Status results from any behavior that clearly violates the standards and/or ethics of the profession but does not meet the criteria for immediate dismissal from the program. (Examples include intentionally cheating on academic assignments or breaking confidentiality by intentionally disclosing sensitive client information.)

Remediation Plan: If a student is placed on Conditional Major Status, a specific and individualized Remediation Plan with contingencies will be identified by the faculty. If sufficient improvement is not made within the specified time according to the plan, the student will be dismissed from the social work major. Faculty will offer to facilitate the process of transferring the student to a new major, or if time does not permit in the student's academic career, to an individualized major. The final authority in approving an individualized major belongs to the Office of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. In cases of gross misconduct, a student may be exited in lieu of a Remediation Plan if faculty believe a remediation plan will not be sufficient to correct the behavior within the confines of the program.

Procedures:

A student *may* be admitted with contingent conditions to the department in cases where they do not meet the five major criteria for Formal Admission. The department will inform the student whether the student will be accepted under the department's *Conditional Major Status Policy*, typically at the end of the interview, and if so, the Remediation Plan that is created will serve as the document to formally notify the student of any contingent conditions associated with Formal Admission.

If the student does not meet all five admissions criteria for the VUSW while following the *Evaluation of Applicants for Formal Admission Procedure*, the student will be notified that they do not currently meet the VUSW criteria for Formal Admission.

At any point when a student does not meet the five criteria for Formal Admission, the assigned faculty member will contact the Program Director about the issue and make a recommendation about whether the student should be admitted under Conditional Major Status. In cases where a student's GPA is not sufficient, the Program Director will proceed with admitting the student on Conditional Academic Status. In cases where the student does not exhibit professional readiness, the Program Director will consult with faculty to determine, if, in the opinion of the majority of the faculty, the student demonstrates the desire and potential for growth to achieve the five criteria for Formal Admission. In the vast majority of cases, except for demonstrations of gross misconduct, it is the practice of the VUSW to give all students a chance to achieve professional readiness to promote human and community well-being.

The student will be notified that they will receive a formal follow-up email from the Program Director with an explanation of the VUSW's *Conditional Major Status Policy* (listed below), a designation of the specific nature of their *Conditional Major Status* (whether academic, professional, or both) and the student's next steps. This email typically occurs within one week of the interview. The Program Director will communicate by email to the student, including next steps related to the creation of a Remediation Plan. The Remediation Plan is the formal document that notifies students on Conditional Major Status of

any contingencies related to their Formal Admission. The Remediation Plan is co-created by the student and the full faculty, as determined by the Program Director, and explains any contingencies related to admission as well as a timeline for completing the plan.

At the conclusion of each semester when all official grades have been recorded by the University Registrar, the assigned VUSW Professional and Academic Advisor or Administrative Assistant, will check Grade Point Averages for all social work majors and inform the Program Director of the names of any students whose GPAs fall below the minimum standard. The Program Director will notify such students via formal email as soon as is practical that they are on Conditional Academic Status and will be given a date that they are to meet with VUSW faculty to discuss their status and create a Remediation Plan related to academics. A written copy of the Remediation Plan will be placed in the student's e-departmental file (s://socw/Students/StudentMasterFiles/). As soon as is practical following the deadline set in the Remediation Plan, the Program Director will inform the student by email whether they will move forward as a social work major or are being dismissed from the program.

Procedure Regarding Failing A Required Social Work Course or Failure to earn a C+ in a Practice/Practicum Course:

At the conclusion of each semester, Social Work faculty members will inform the VUSW Program Director of any social work majors who fail a required social work course, or fail to earn a sufficient grade in a Practice/Practicum course. In these cases, the student will be placed on Conditional Major Status and will be allowed to retake the class one time in order to earn a passing grade.

Students are required to earn grades of C+ or higher in all Practice/Practicum related (SOCW 356, 376, 386, 455, 456, 475, 476, 485 & 486) in order to remain eligible to continue in the practicum education portion of the social work major. Students removed from practicum placement due to not earning the required grade in a Practice/Practicum related course will be dismissed from the major. Students in such a situation may request permission from the faculty to continue in the program by returning the following year to re-take the class in which they earned an unacceptable grade and complete the remaining course and practicumwork. The decision to grant such permission will be made by consensus of the social work department faculty.

Students on Conditional Major Status must remedy the deficiency no later than December of their junior year as determined by the student's anticipated graduation date. Failure to resolve the issue by the end of the first semester of the junior year will result in dismissal from the major.

Students will be notified by the Program Director via email as soon as is practical that, as a result of failing a required social work course, they are on *Conditional Major Status*. They will be informed that they will be allowed one opportunity to retake the class and that if they fail to earn a sufficient grade, they will be dismissed from the major. If a student is unable to retake a failed class prior to when the student would normally enter the professional curriculum and begin practicum work (second semester of the junior year), the student will not be allowed to enter practicum and will have to request permission of the faculty to return the following year to retake the class and continue on in the program.

A student who fails to earn a passing grade or C+ for a Practice/Practicum course the second time will be dismissed from the social work major.

Remediation Plan

Objectives and an action plan will be developed jointly by the student and faculty. A time frame for achievement of the goal/s will be specified and a follow-up date or dates will be set to assess progress. The Program Director or designee will be assigned as the liaison to the student for the purpose of monitoring progress toward meeting the goal(s) of the plan. The role of the Social Work Department is to assist the student in accomplishing the goal, though the responsibility for successful completion rests with the student. In cases of gross misconduct, a student may be exited in lieu of a Remediation Plan if faculty believe a remediation plan will not be sufficient to correct the behavior within the confines of the program.

The following provide academic and professional examples for such *Conditional Major Status* circumstances:

Academic example: In exceptional cases, with unanimous VUSW faculty agreement, VUSW may choose to admit students into the department with a cumulative grade point average lower than 2.0 and/or a social work grade point average lower than 2.5. In such circumstances, students would be admitted to the department on *Conditional Major Status (Academic)*. Students would be allowed until the end of the fall semester of their junior year to raise their overall grade point average to 2.0 or their social work department grade point average to 2.5 in order to remain a social work major and move into practicum placements. (such as increasing one's overall GPA to a specified level)

Professional example: With unanimous VUSW faculty agreement, VUSW may choose to accept a student who has not yet exhibited professional readiness to promote human and community well-being, but who shows desire and potential to do so. In such circumstances, a student would be admitted to the department on *Conditional Major Status (Professional)*. The student would be allowed until the end of the fall semester of their junior year to demonstrate professional readiness, as determined by completion of a student's Remediation Plan. Students who exhibit gross misconduct may be exited from the program without a Remediation Plan.

The Program Director or designee will determine the regularity of the student's meetings to provide feedback to the student on progress. In order to remain a social work major, the student must successfully complete the Remediation Plan as evaluated by the VUSW faculty by the end of the fall semester of their junior year. The burden to complete the Remediation Plan rests with the student, not VUSW faculty. Faculty's role is to guide the student and provide a regular opportunity for student to assess their progress.

Transfer of Credits

Policies:

Students *may* be granted transfer credit for courses taken in accredited programs if, after being provided with course syllabi, the Program Director determines that the course content is equivalent to the VUSW course that is being replaced.

The VUSW *may* offer transfer credit for social work courses taken in programs that are not accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, if, after being provided with course syllabi, and if after a conversation with the transferring institution's Program Director, the Program Director determines that the course content is equivalent to the VUSW course that is being replaced and meets the 2022 EPAS.

Procedures:

The VUSW Program Director will receive any notification of requests for articulation of transfer credits from the University Registrar. The Program Director will follow the VUSW *Transfer Credit Policy* when evaluating whether to accept transfer credit for social work courses. The Program Director will initiate conversations with other schools as needed or articulation agreements that meet the above criteria.

Work for Credit

Policy

As required by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the VUSW does not grant social work course credit for life experience or previous work experience. Students with questions about this policy should contact the VUSW Program Director.

Procedures

Informing applicants and other constituents of the program's Work for Credit policy

The policy on life experience or previous work experience appears in the VUSW Student Handbook, which is delivered to students with the admission materials and posted on the website at <https://www.valpo.edu/social-work/academics/bachelor-of-social-work-degree/> under the subheading "Formal Admission." Other constituents who inquire about this policy are also referred to the VUSW Student Handbook. Students with questions about this policy should contact the VUSW Program Director.

Academic Advising

Valparaiso University Social Work requires all Professional and Academic Advisors to be full-time faculty or professional VUSW staff, to provide academic advising, professional mentoring and career advice concurrently. It should be noted that while VUSW Academic Advisors may serve some functions of the student's Professional Advisor, these roles are explained in separate policies and procedures.

Policies:

All Social Work majors are assigned to a dedicated Academic Advisor at the beginning of the program. The Academic Advisor is the primary point of contact for BSW student support and academic advising throughout the program. Students must meet with their Academic Advisor at least once during the advisement period and may not register for courses until this meeting occurs.

Procedures:

When a student declares an intent to major in Social Work with the University Registrar, the Registrar assigns the student to either a full-time social work professor/instructor or, if applicable, the professional Academic Advisor staff person assigned to the department.

The Academic Advisor acts as a guide to help students navigate their plan of study. Students must meet with the Academic Advisor at least once during the advisement period each semester to learn about and develop their individualized plan. Students must arrive to their advisory session prepared with their own plan and potential schedule of desired courses. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to be certain that they meet all degree requirements

All students admitted to the university are considered to be in "good standing." At the end of any semester, if a student's overall GPA falls below 2.0, their Social Work GPA for required social work courses falls below 2.5, or they fail any social work course, the Academic Advisor will notify the Program Director that the student will move into Conditional Major Status (as discussed in section 3.2.2 in this document). Students are required to contact their Academic Advisor to develop a plan to help get them back on course to academic success.

The Academic Advisor is required to share the following priorities with students:

1. major requirements;
2. minor requirements (referring students to the appropriate Academic Advisor outside the department as needed); and
3. general education requirements.

In the Formal Admission interview, students are told that helpful and timely academic advising will be key to the process of student success. They are also informed that advising involves preparatory time, planning, and a solid relationship between the student and their Academic Advisor.

Via the Student Handbook in Appendix A and in conversations with their Academic Advisor, students are also encouraged to be their own educational advocate, who bear the ultimate responsibility for developing their academic program and meeting all requirements for degree completion. It is further communicated in the Student Handbook that it is the student's responsibility to:

1. Meet with the advisor as frequently as necessary, at a minimum of once during the advisement period each term, to learn about and develop their own individualized plan.
2. Seek sources of information to assist them in making life/career decisions.
3. Contact the advisor when confronted with academic problems or challenges that may affect their performance.
4. Be an active, co-creator in the advisee-advisor relationship by becoming increasingly self-directing and self-advocating.
5. Come prepared for any advisee-advisor meeting.

Prior to the start of registration for each semester, students meet with their Academic Advisor. As communicated to students in the VUSW Student Handbook, students are expected to arrive for advising having *already prepared a potential schedule*. Students should use DataVU, the social work planning spreadsheet tool, and registrar resources to help you determine what classes you need to take in order to fulfill your degree requirements. Students should bring ideas, questions, and scheduling concerns to their advising session.

During a student's first academic advising session, students are informed that completing a BSW in four years requires careful planning. It is critical that students who wish to apply to the social work department use all available resources- including current online course schedules and their assigned advisor for social work, to assure that it will be possible to complete the required coursework in the allotted time. The later in one's career at VU one begins taking social work classes, the more complicated it becomes to complete the degree in four years.

The VUSW Student Handbook and the Academic Advisor provide information to assist students in scheduling courses throughout their time in the VUSW. DataVU Self-Service provides a way for students to compare the courses taken with the degree requirements. DataVU can be accessed at <https://datavu1.valpo.edu/> . Familiarity with DataVU is critical for planning student class schedules each semester in order to assist students in graduating from Valpo in the typical four years.

All Academic Advisors are required to attend training on student advisement through DataVU and Starfish, the University's student retention software. Starfish can be accessed by students and Academic Advisors at any time at: <https://starfish.valpo.edu/> and this resource may help a student stay connected

with professors, attend office hours or stay abreast of successes or challenges in any course. Starfish also sends a notice to Academic Advisors whenever a student is failing a course, has a low-test or quiz score or has been given a “flag” by a professor indicating a concern. If the Academic Advisor becomes aware of a flag, they may contact the student via email to determine if the student needs further assistance. Students are responsible for their academic journey. A student who does not receive a flag or email from their advisor should not assume a particular level of academic progress. Students should check starfish, Canvas, and DataVU for more information and should contact professors regarding class issues.

During advising meetings, Academic Advisors will share key academic priorities as well as additional academic opportunities such as study abroad. They will urge students to consider the intentionality of electives, and to find courses that will enhance intellectual development, career prospects, personal growth, and/or quality of life.

If at any time students have specific questions about their academic plans, they are reminded in the VUSW Student Handbook and by their Academic Advisor to contact the VU Registrar Office registrar@valpo.edu or 219-464-5212. This office is designed to assist students in every step of tracking their completion of degree requirements.

Academic Advisors also encourage students to take part in resources across the university, including at the Academic Success Center (ASC) by going to <https://www.valpo.edu/academic-success-center/> or by emailing academic.success@valpo.edu . The Writing Center also offers a variety of programs and services to support student academic writing.

Professional Advising

Valparaiso University Social Work requires all Professional and Academic Advisors to be full-time faculty or professional VUSW staff, to provide academic advising, professional mentoring and career advice concurrently. It should be noted that while VUSW Academic Advisors may serve some functions of the student's Professional Advisor, these roles are explained in separate policies and procedures.

Policies:

The designated Social Work Academic Advisor for all first- and second-year students, also serves as the formal Professional Advisor. The Professional Advisor provides information about professional opportunities for students during the Formal Admission interview. During the Formal Admission interview, students are encouraged to visit Social Work faculty during office hours and to build relationships with faculty, who can mentor and advise students.

The Director of Practicum serves as the formal Professional Advisor for all junior and senior students. This Professional Advising relationship begins in the fall semester of the Junior year in preparation for practicum and continues within and outside of the Junior and Senior Integrative Seminars.

All VUSW faculty Professional Advise students during office hours. As required by the *Valparaiso University, Faculty Handbook*, full-time faculty members must schedule a minimum of six hours of office hours per week. This allotment of office hours provides students with ample opportunity to engage with faculty and receive professional advising.

Procedures:

The designated Academic Advisor also serves as the formal Professional Advisor. For first- and second-year students, the Academic Advisor is a professional Social Work faculty or staff person, determined by the Program Director. The Professional Advisor (who also serves as the Academic Advisor) leads the Formal Admission interview, which acts as the conduit for providing information about professional opportunities. During the Formal Admission interview, the Professional Advisor reviews the student's Rubric for Assessing Professional Development and discusses strengths and opportunities for professional growth. The Professional Advisor discusses the student's Personal Statement and enquires about the student's future professional goals and aspirations.

During the formal Admission Interview, students are informed about faculty office hours and are also encouraged to visit Social Work faculty during these times. Social Work faculty are given sufficient time

during required regular office hours to provide Professional Advising. As required by the Valparaiso University, Faculty Handbook, (which can be found at https://www.valpo.edu/faculty-senate/files/2024/08/2024-Faculty-Handbook_1371170994.pdf), “Faculty members should schedule generous office hours (a minimum of six hours per week for faculty teaching full time) and should communicate in every way possible their availability to students during reasonable hours.” VUSW faculty are expected to use a portion of these hours for Professional Advising and informal mentoring.

During the Formal Admission interview, students are encouraged to identify a professional mentor in the department who has compatible interests or personal style, who will likely write the student’s letter of recommendation for jobs or graduate school. Students are encouraged to build a natural relationship with that faculty member through drop in office hours or through other opportunities such as a research assistantship, extracurricular activities, class projects, or as leader of a student group. Faculty have historically used some of the student fee budget to support “mentoring,” including covering the cost of taking students out for coffee. (This was not utilized very often during COVID, but it is expected that students will use this again.) The Program Director notifies faculty about the mentoring budget annually and encourages faculty to use this resource for informal student mentoring. As part of the practicum application process, junior students must revise their Personal Statement submitted during the Formal Admission interview about their personal and professional goals, and must reassess themselves using the Rubric for Assessing Professional Development.

Faculty members also provide ongoing informal mentoring through office hours as requested and write letters of recommendation for employment and further schooling. Faculty invite students to ask questions about careers and help students network by connecting them with alumni and community members. For example, in Social Work 151, faculty engages social worker presenters from the practicum in the classroom and requires students to prepare questions for each presenter. This experience is a tangible way that Social Work faculty help students network with other professionals in the practicum. Faculty also attempt to model self-care and well-being for students, by maintaining office hours during the regular work day (not late at night) and by encouraging professional email communication, as opposed to only text communication.

Professional development activities, such as leading group experientials in SOCW 455, meeting with legislators in SOCW 410, and engaging a community as part of a team project in SOCW 456, provide ample opportunities for students to receive professional guidance in and outside of the formal classroom.

Finally, students are encouraged to organize events to support their professional development. Before the COVID pandemic, the Student Social Work Organization hosted an alumni panel where current students from any cohort could connect with alumni to discuss professional experiences in graduate school or in the practicum.

Documentation that Professional Advising is Provided by Social Work Program Faculty, Staff or Both:

The VUSW program requires that professional advising be provided by Social Work program faculty or staff. The formal Professional Advisor also serves as the student’s Academic Advisor, but with different

functions. At any time, students are encouraged to also seek out informal Professional Advising from another Social Work faculty member.

Evaluating Student Academic Performance

Policies:

Per University Policy, as approved by the Council of Deans, every Valparaiso University syllabus is required to have, “a) clear statement on the manner in which student grades will be calculated, including a list of graded elements, total points vs. averaged grades, extra credit, etc. b) outline the grading scale to be used, e.g., A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, etc.

And c) indicate the weight given to components in the final grade, e.g., tests = 35%, papers =40%, attendance = 10%”

Council of Deans Approved Required and Recommended Syllabus Elements, Aug. 2021, p. 1

Students are required to earn grades of C+ or higher in all Practice/Practicum related courses, in order to remain eligible to continue in the practicum education portion of the social work major. Students removed from practicum placement due to not earning the required grade in a Practice/Practicum related course will be dismissed from the major. See *Policy about Failing A Required Social Work Course or Failure to earn a C+ in a Practice/Practicum Course*.

Procedures:

Per University Policy, as approved by the Council of Deans, every Valparaiso University syllabus is required to have the following information:

2) Grading

a) include a clear statement on the manner in which student grades will be calculated, including a list of graded elements, total points vs. averaged grades, extra credit, etc.

b) outline the grading scale to be used, e.g., A = 93-100, A- = 90-92, B+ = 87-89, etc.

c) indicate the weight given to components in the final grade, e.g., tests = 35%, papers =40%, attendance = 10%

Council of Deans Approved Required and Recommended Syllabus Elements, Aug. 2021, p. 1

The University uses simple syllabus to ensure that required components are a part of all syllabi. Syllabi are maintained at <https://valpo.simplesyllabus.com/>

Policy about Failing A Required Social Work Course or Failure to earn a C+ in a Practice/Practicum Course:

Students are graded per the requirements of the class syllabus. It is up to the individual professor to designate which percentages constitute a particular letter grade, but that must be listed in the syllabus. Additionally, in the syllabus, professors explain how the final grade is composed of different categories of work. For example, a syllabus will include a section that lists what percentage of the final grade comes from tests, writing or participation.

At midterm, faculty are required by the university to enter grades to inform the student how they are doing in the class. This deadline is before the final university withdrawal deadline, so that students have a chance to determine whether or not they would like to remain in the class, based on their performance, at the end of the semester, faculty will give students grades based on the points earned in the class. Specific grading procedures vary by professor, but are outlined in each course syllabus and further explained in the course and on Canvas. Faculty submit grades to the registrar via the DataVU portal before the grading deadline and students are able to see their grades as soon as the grades have been posted in DataVU. At the end of every semester, the VUSW Department culls data and looks at course failures and GPA for all majors.

Students are required to earn grades of C+ or higher in all Practice/Practicum related courses, (SOCW 356, 376, 386, 455, 456, 475, 476, 485 & 486), in order to remain eligible to continue in the practicum education portion of the social work major. Students removed from practicum placement due to not earning the required grade in a Practice/Practicum related course will be dismissed from the major. Students in such a situation may request permission from the faculty to continue in the program by returning the following year to re-take the class in which they earned an unacceptable grade and complete the remaining course and practicumwork. The decision to grant such permission will be made by consensus of the social work department faculty.

Social Work Attendance Policy. No student may pass a class who has missed more than 1/4 of the classes. (For example, 10 or more classes for a 3 day a week class.)

At the conclusion of each semester, Social Work faculty members will inform the VUSW Program Director of any social work majors who fail a required social work course, or fail to earn a sufficient grade in a Practice/Practicum course. In these cases, the student will be placed on Conditional Major Status and will be allowed to retake the class one time in order to earn a passing grade.

Students will be notified by the Program Director via email as soon as it is practical that, as a result of failing a required social work course, they are on *Conditional Major Status*. They will be informed that they will be allowed one opportunity to retake the class and that if they fail to earn a sufficient grade, they will be dismissed from the major. If a student is unable to retake a failed class prior to when the

student would normally enter the professional curriculum and begin practicum work (second semester of the junior year), the student will not be allowed to enter practicum and will have to request permission of the faculty to return the following year to retake the class and continue on in the program. A student who fails to earn a passing grade or C+ for a Practice/Practicum course the second time will be dismissed from the social work major. In some cases, students may not be able to retake a practice or practicum class if they have been dismissed from the major for professional (behavioral) reasons.

Academic Performance Grievance

Policies:

Student Academic Grievance Policy

Students who do not agree with their grades, may appeal to the VUSW Student Standards Review Committee (SSRC). Students will be notified of the SSRC decision. Should the student wish to appeal the SSRC decision, the student may contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to follow the university appeals process.

Procedures:

If a student disagrees with their grades, students are asked to first contact the specific Social Work faculty member directly to see if they can resolve the disagreement. If the student cannot resolve the disagreement with the individual faculty member, they have a right to appeal. Students must email the VUSW Program Director to request a meeting with the VUSW Student Standards Review Committee (SSRC) with the purpose, the steps the student has taken to attempt to resolve the dispute, and what has happened to date.

The VUSW Student Standards Review Committee (SSRC) is composed of VUSW faculty, assigned at the discretion of the BSW Program Director. After the meeting, the BSW Program Director informs the student of the decision by email, typically within three days of the meeting of the SSRC. A copy of the decision of the SSRC is placed in the student's electronic file, located in the Social Work department's shared drive (only accessible by Social Work faculty and staff), file-path name: S:drive/socw/Students/StudentMasterFiles .

Should the student wish to appeal the SSRC decision, the student may contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and follow the university appeal process.

Evaluating Student's Professional Performance

Policies:

Criteria for Evaluation for Student Professional Performance

A student must complete the Professional Readiness Assessment and the Learning Community Agreement found in the Formal Admission documentation (see section 3.1.2 of the self-study for more details and how to find this). Students additionally self-assess their professional performance using the Professional Readiness Assessment as part of their Practicum Education e-Application and prior to entering their junior practicum placement. The Professional Readiness Assessment is one method by which the department conveys the program's professional expectations. Faculty may use this form in assessing and evaluating red flags related to student professional performance, including in the construction of a Remediation Plan when working with students on *Conditional Professional (Major) Status* for professional reasons. The content includes, but is not limited to:

1. communication and professional/client boundaries.
2. professional ethics and respect
3. critical thinking skills in selecting how to work effectively within an agency or intervene with clients.
4. the NASW Code of ethics
5. dress code for the specific setting
6. responsiveness to diversity and inclusion
7. personal responsibility
8. attendance
9. punctuality
10. collegiality
11. coachability
12. compliance with the VUSW BSW code of conduct and confidentiality
13. self-awareness

VUSW faculty will use the Professional Readiness Assessment and Learning Community Agreement as the basis for evaluating a student's professional performance. Students who do not meet these professional performance standards may be placed on *Conditional Major Status* and will be required to jointly create and implement a Remediation Plan in order to move forward. Progress on the Remediation Plan will be evaluated by VUSW faculty in order to determine whether the student will stay enrolled in the major.

In cases of gross misconduct, students may be dismissed from the major without receiving a Remediation plan.

Procedures:

If it is determined by the VUSW faculty that a student does not exhibit demonstration of professional readiness expectations, the student may be put on *Conditional Major Status* for professional reasons. Depending on the specific case, the Professional Readiness Assessment and Learning Community Agreement documents may be used as part of any Remediation Plan as part of the requirements for leaving *Conditional Major Status*. In cases of gross misconduct, students may be dismissed from the major without receiving a Remediation plan.

It is the goal of the VUSW faculty that students self-score all items on their Professional Readiness Assessment at a 4 of possible 5 prior to beginning internship in the second semester of their junior year. When students self-score lower than 4 on any item of the Professional Readiness Assessment, it may indicate the need for consultation, additional education or remediation.

Professional Performance Grievance

Policies:

Student Professional Grievance Policy

The student is evaluated by faculty on professional performance criteria as established in the *Criteria for Evaluation for Student Professional Performance*; if the student disagrees with the evaluation, there is an appeal process involving a Student Standards Review Committee (SSRC). Should the student wish to appeal the SSRC decision, the student may contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences to follow the university appeals process.

Procedures:

If a student does not agree with how they were professionally evaluated, they are first asked to contact the specific Social Work faculty member directly to see if they can resolve the disagreement. If the student cannot resolve the disagreement with the individual faculty member, they have a right to appeal by emailing the VUSW Program Director to request a meeting with the VUSW Student Standards Review Committee (SSRC) to present their issue for resolution. The SSRC is composed of VUSW faculty and other professionals, assigned at the discretion of the BSW Program Director.

After the meeting, the BSW Program Director informs the student of the decision in writing by email, typically within 10 business days of the meeting of the SSRC. A copy of the SSRC's decision is placed in the student's electronic file in the S:/drive (only accessible by Social Work faculty and staff), file-path name: S:/drive/socw/Students/StudentMasterFiles . Should the student wish to appeal this decision, the student may contact the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Informing Students of Criteria for Evaluating Performance

Evaluating Student Academic Performance

Evaluation Criteria: In order to remain a social work major and progress through the program, students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 and a social work department grade point average of 2.5. Grades are determined by evaluation of the student's submitted work according to the Syllabus for each class taken, per rubrics established by each individual instructor. For example, items such as content, research, evidence of thought and basic grammar may contribute to a grade. Class participation is also evaluated as part of the student's overall grade.

How Students are Informed of Criteria: Students are informed of the Academic Performance Criteria in the first Data Form, part of the Formal Admission documentation. The criteria are also referenced in the admissions interview and listed in Appendix A of the Student Handbook.

How Students are Informed of Academic Performance Grievance Policies and Procedures:

Students are informed of the academic performance grievance policies during the Formal Admission interview and in Appendix A of the Student Handbook.

Evaluating Student's Professional Performance

Evaluation Criteria: Student Professional Performance is evaluated based on the Professional Readiness Assessment (which is included in the Formal Admission documentation) as well as the student's professional performance in the practicum, including use of the Junior and Senior Practicum Evaluation forms by the student, the agency practicum instructor and the Director of Practicum.

How Students are Informed of Criteria:

Students are informed of the criteria for Professional Performance review (using the Professional Readiness Assessment) in the admissions interview. The Student Handbook and the practicum manuals for juniors and seniors also list the criteria for evaluation of professional performance.

How Students are Informed of Professional Performance Grievance Policies and Procedures:

Students are informed of the Professional Performance Grievance Policy in Appendix A of the Student Handbook. This policy is also referenced in the Formal Admission interview.

Termination for Academic or Professional Performance

Students may be dismissed or have their enrollment terminated from VUSW for reasons of academic or professional performance. When possible for minor professional reasons, or academic reasons prior to Spring of Junior year, VUSW faculty will counsel and intervene with students who exhibit deficiencies in academic or professional behavior to jointly create an individualized Remediation Plan to repair the identified deficiencies. Not all students may receive a Remediation Plan and students may be dismissed without a Remediation Plan in cases of significant misconduct and harm.

In the cases of faculty intervention, sometimes, despite this effort, a student still does not achieve necessary academic or professional performance in order to remain in the social work program. In other cases, such as when students exhibit significant misconduct and harm, they may be dismissed outright without further intervention. In such cases, a student's enrollment in the social work program will be terminated based on the following policies and procedures:

Termination Based on Academic Performance

Policies:

A student's enrollment in the social work program may be terminated for academic reasons relating to GPA or individual course performance for:

- Failure to reach the required grade point average of a Valparaiso University cumulative 2.0 GPA.
- Failure to reach the Social Work Required Course GPA of 2.5 by the end of the first semester of the student's junior year. or
- Failure to maintain the required cumulative and Social Work GPA every semester thereafter.
- Failure to earn grades of C+ or higher in all Practice/Practicum related courses (SOCW 356, 376, 386, 455, 456, 475, 476, 485 & 486).

Procedures:

In such cases of academic performance termination, the Program Director will formally inform the student by email that the student's enrollment in the social work program has been terminated for academic reasons. The email will explain the specific reason for academic termination and will provide a referral to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in order to encourage the student to create an individualized major.

Termination Based on Professional Performance

Policies:

In cases of significant misconduct or significant deficient professional performance as determined by VUSW faculty, a student will be immediately terminated from the program. In cases of minor misconduct, termination of student enrollment in the social work major for professional performance occurs after a student has been placed on Conditional Professional Status. In such cases, termination occurs after evaluation by the VUSW faculty typically for two reasons:

- Failure to show sufficient professional behavioral change as defined by the student's Remediation Plan while on Conditional Professional Status.
- Persistent demonstration by the student of additional misbehavior patterns or gross disregard for professional performance after the creation of the Remediation Plan.

Procedures:

In such cases of professional performance termination, the Program Director will formally inform the student by email that the student's enrollment in the social work program has been terminated for professional reasons. The email will explain in general terms why the student is being terminated, while at the same time, paying greatest attention to protecting the rights and safety of others, and provide a referral to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in order to encourage the student to create an individualized major.

How Students are Informed of Academic Performance Termination Policies and Procedures:

Students who are subject to termination from the VUSW program are informed of the academic performance termination policies in the Formal Admission documentation, by reference during the admissions interview, and via listing in Appendix A of the Student Handbook.

How Students are Informed of Professional Performance Termination Policies and Procedures:

Students are informed of the professional performance termination policies during the Formal Admission interview, and via the Student Handbook in Appendix A.

Student's Rights to Participate in Academic & Student Affairs Policymaking

Policies

The department's *Speak Up Policy*, states:

Students will explore their role and responsibility in creating an inclusive and responsive organization. All are asked to share overt support of each other and directly address one another when issues, concerns, and items of relevance to functioning come to the forefront. Open communication, generous listening, questions and feedback are encouraged and expected. (In Appendix A of the Student Handbook)

Students may use the *Speak Up Policy* at any time of year to advocate for changes in VUSW Academic and Student Affairs policy.

Once per year, students have a designated time at the student-led, department-wide Town Hall meeting where they propose changes to improve the department, related to academic and student affairs policymaking.

Procedures Specifying Student Rights:

Beginning with the initial admissions interview VUSW has endeavored to encourage students to use their rights to participate in academic and student affairs policymaking. Students are made aware of this opportunity as part of the Formal Admission process.

The *Learning Community Agreement* in the Formal Admission documentation outlines the student's right to participate in the purpose of the *Speak Up Policy*.

Senior students are expected to plan and lead the department-wide Town Hall meeting. This right is embedded in the curriculum of SOCW 456: Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities, and

endows them with the responsibility for gathering information from fellow students and determining what policy changes on which to focus with proposals at the Town Hall meeting.

Additionally, students have the right and responsibility to provide confidential feedback on all academic courses using the university-wide CoursEval survey. Statement of this right is included in all course syllabi. Aggregated confidential feedback is provided to the individual faculty member and the Program Director for review at the Annual Program Review meeting at the end of the school year.

Procedures Specifying Students' Responsibilities:

As part of the Formal Admission process, the Learning Community Agreement outlines the student's responsibility to participate in the purpose of the *Speak Up Policy* from the time of admission. This is also discussed in the Formal Admission interview.

The following excerpt is taken from the Student Handbook in Appendix A.

"VUSW takes student input very seriously. Part of VUSW's implicit curriculum is to create an environment that encourages student feedback. Students are welcome to make suggestions to faculty about departmental procedures at any time. However, one event each year is designed specifically and explicitly to elicit student satisfaction and ideas regarding the department. That event is Town Hall."

Town Hall is an event planned by senior social work majors as part of SOCW 456, with guidance from VUSW faculty. Planning includes surveying students, conducting statistical analysis, designing and presenting the results, leading a brainstorming session on the day of the event, planning logistics, and planning the voting for new leadership in the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO). This is also the day that eligible students are presented with the Servant Scholar Award.

The topic for the survey is decided upon jointly by faculty and students in a collaborative process to assess implicit curriculum and ADEI and is targeted toward policy change in the department related to implicit curriculum. The only set guidelines are that it must be about the Social Work Department and be a specific enough topic to study in detail.

At the end of the Spring semester each year, the faculty systematically reviews the Town Hall results, Course Evaluations, and Department Evaluation results. Faculty jointly plan departmental and course changes in response to these events. A report summarizing the feedback and the changes is generated. This evaluation event has since been named the Annual Program Review and typically takes place near the end of May.

Provides Opportunities for Student Organization:

The VUSW program provides opportunities and encourages students to organize for their own interests. While students may be provided additional opportunities and encouragement through extracurricular

opportunities mentioned in the classroom, the best example of this opportunity is provided by the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO). SSWO is a student-run organization, represented mainly by Valparaiso University social work majors and minors. SSWO is facilitated by members who focus on promoting the values of the social work profession (service, social justice, the dignity and worth of individuals, the importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence) on the VU campus and in the local community. SSWO is purely shaped by student interests. In the past, SSWO leadership has chosen to sponsor families in need, mentor children in the area, educate children about health, contribute to MLK Jr. Day focus sessions, advocate for changes in social policy, educate the student body about the needs of others and support other student groups in their service projects.

“Springing from the National Federation of Student Social Workers, the Student Social Work Organization was founded in 1979” (SSWO files). Students fill the governance positions by annual election or as otherwise determined by the student leadership. The organization is entirely student-run.”

Additionally, students and alumni stay connected around social work issues and opportunities through the Instagram page: <https://www.instagram.com/valposocialwork/>

Furthermore, in the course of several classes, students also organize in work groups on class projects reflecting their interests. For example, in SOCW 410, Social Welfare Policy: Analysis and Advocacy, students have a chance to form groups based on an advocacy topic that they want to focus on throughout the semester. Additionally, in SOCW 456: Generalist Practice with Organizations and Communities, students choose a bill that they personally want to lobby for at the state legislature. Students have an opportunity to organize with other students around the same topic and work as a coalition on the same topic.

Encourages Student Organization:

Faculty encourage student organization beginning with the VUSW Formal Admission interview. This document’s content in 3.1.9 and 3.1.10 are clearly interrelated and therefore should be seen as two different expressions of student self-determination. However, the primary method students have for organizing according to interests is through the Student Social Work Organization (SSWO). At the annual department-wide Town Hall meeting, facilitated by senior social work majors, students tell other students about SSWO leadership opportunities and activities.

In the student lounge, a Social Work bulletin Board is available where SSWO may post events and activities. SSWO leadership can also ask faculty to send out department-wide communications about events through email.