

POLICY AND PROCEDURES CONCERNING TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR
ADMISSION, ACADEMIC MATRICULATION, AND GRADUATION IN THE SALISBURY
UNIVERSITY SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

**THIS POLICY APPLIES TO THE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN UNDERGRADUATE
AND GRADUATE SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS AT SALISBURY UNIVERSITY**

Introduction and Background

Salisbury University and the social work programs housed within the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies strive to attract, matriculate, and educate students who not only possess intellectual ability but also have a high capacity for ethical and professional behavior (hereinafter referred to as SW Professional Students). Fundamental attributes of ethical and professional behavior include, but are not limited to: honesty, integrity, and civility; demonstrated desire to learn and respect for the academic process; concern for the welfare of clients, their families and the communities in which they live; commitment to client confidentiality; respect for the rights of others; emotional maturity; and self-discipline. Since the development of ethical and professional behavior is an integral part of education in the social work profession, such conduct during education is an academic issue. Professionalism is a cornerstone of a successful academic program, just as it is a cornerstone of the responsible conduct of research, maintaining integrity and compassion in the delivery of social work services, and building a collegial and conscientious interdisciplinary professional team.

Circumstances may arise during a student's course of study that call into question the capacity or commitment of the student to maintain this academic standard. Salisbury University, the Seidel School of Education and Professional Studies, and the Social Work Department have the responsibility and authority to determine a student's fitness to continue in this undergraduate and graduate program of study.

The process of transitioning from a student to a professional requires study, self-reflection and self-management on the part of learners. Development of ethical and professional behavior is critical in the education of SW Professional Students and considered a core competency in the academic program. Thus ethical and professional behaviors are considered a

key factor in academic good standing. When a student applies to either the Social Work Graduate or Undergraduate Program he or she commits to comply with all regulations, including those regarding ethical and professional conduct, established by the program.

The Social Work Program at Salisbury University has established this policy regarding technical standards for program admission, matriculation and graduation and adopted procedures for addressing standards of ethical and professional behavior for SW Professional Students. The policy and procedures identify student responsibilities and rights in conjunction with standards of fairness, privacy, and due process. They are derived, in part, from the standards of conduct adopted by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Work (NASW) at both the national and state levels, Maryland's Board of Social Work Examiners, and has been approved by Salisbury University's General Counsel.

As noted above, educating in ethical and professional behavior is integral to the education of SW Professional Students and violations of this Policy will be considered as academic issues. Failure to meet ethical and professional behavior standards will result in action up to, and possibly including, program dismissal, referral to Dean of Students and/or dismissal from the University and may jeopardize advancement and/or graduation.

In addition to the academic requirements of each program, this Policy and its related procedures shall govern academic and professional behavior of SW Professional Students.

Objective

The objective of this document is to articulate the academic importance of the ethical and professional behavior of students within both the Graduate and Undergraduate Programs in the Social Work Department. This document serves to provide students, faculty, field instructors and

staff with clearly articulated expectations and policies regarding student ethical and professional behavior. As noted within this document, both the Graduate and Undergraduate professional Programs have the authority and responsibility to act on concerns regarding the ethical and professional behavior of students. Refer to the Salisbury University Student Handbook for the procedures for managing and addressing student ethical and professional behavior and assurances that the standards are implemented consistent with principles of fairness, privacy, and due process.

Scope

All SW Professional Students are expected to demonstrate high standards of ethical and professional behavior in all educational and field instruction settings including, but not limited to:

1. Classroom-based milieu (e.g., classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, on-line and technology-based classes);
2. Professional and field instruction sites that are part of the learning program (e.g., hospitals, mental health clinics, community health centers, schools, Departments of Social Services, correctional facilities, substance abuse treatment programs, etc.);
3. Other settings not part of the formal learning program but which contribute to the learning process (e.g., student-run special interest group meetings and activities, clubs and governance structures, interactions with SW and non-SW Professional Program administrators, faculty and staff of the University, or any other member of the campus community); and

4. Off Campus settings as described below:

This Policy is intended to guide the ethical and professional behavior of students studying in the SW Professional Programs. It is not intended to directly guide or address behavior that is a part of a student's private life, but such behavior may come to the attention of Salisbury University in several ways and become the focus of a Policy investigation or charge:

- (a) Conduct may be reported to a member of the faculty or administration from a variety of sources that raises concern about the student's capacity to continue his or her studies. If such reported conduct raises a concern about the safety of the student or the safety of others that the student may have contact with at the institution or includes behavior that could indicate an issue with judgment or moral, ethical, or personal values that would preclude satisfactory functioning in the chosen discipline, an inquiry may be conducted and action taken on the basis of the information gathered.
- (b) If a student is charged with an offense in the civil justice system and the University becomes aware of and verifies this circumstance through self-report of the student or a reliable, verified source, the University, in its sole discretion, will promptly pursue an investigation and institute commensurate academic and/or student judicial disciplinary action simultaneous with or in advance of any final adjudication of the civil court proceeding. The University will complete this due process regardless of whether the student withdraws from the program, the University and/or fails to participate in the process.

- (c) If a student is charged with a criminal offense, he or she is obligated to report this to their department chair or program director immediately. If a matriculating student has been charged with a criminal offense between the time he/she submitted an application and the time he/she arrives at school, or at any time while a student at Salisbury University, he/she must inform the department chair or program director of the charges before the first day of classes. If the University later discovers that a student withheld disclosure of a criminal charge, he/she may be subject to immediate program dismissal. The University, in its sole discretion, will promptly pursue an investigation and institute commensurate academic and/or student judicial disciplinary action simultaneous with or in advance of any final adjudication of the criminal court proceeding. The University will complete this due process regardless of whether the student withdraws from the program, the University and/or fails to participate in the process. This is consistent with the obligation of the University and its professional programs to ensure the safety of clients and others.
- (d) SW Professional Students are expected to hold themselves to the highest standards of ethical and professional conduct at all times. As part of their education and educating, these students must begin to practice behavior that they will uphold for the rest of their professional lives.

Technical Standards

Consistent with our mission and philosophy to provide quality professional education and to ensure that our graduates are able to function in a broad variety of professional situations, the

Social Work Department evaluates the functional abilities and performance of all students. Certain functional abilities are essential for the delivery of safe, effective social work practice. Therefore, the faculty has determined that the following technical standards and skills are requisite for admission, progression, and graduation from the Salisbury University BASW and MSW Programs. Students and prospective students must certify that they understand and are able to meet and maintain these standards with or without reasonable accommodation, aides and/or services related to a disability. A student unable to perform these technical standards may not be admissible or may be subject to a hearing to review whether the student may continue to matriculate in the social work program. Any student or prospective student who is concerned about his/her ability to meet any of the technical standards described herein should contact the relevant Program Director or Department Chair as soon as possible and at any time during the admissions or matriculation process.

To be admitted or to maintain enrollment in the Social Work Program the student must:

Physical Skills

1. Exhibit motor and sensory abilities necessary to attend and actively engage in class and practicum placement.

Cognitive Skills

2. Demonstrate accurate knowledge of social work as a profession.
3. Demonstrate clarity of thinking to process information and appropriately apply it to situations in classroom and field.
4. Demonstrate grounding in relevant social, behavioral and biological science knowledge and research—including knowledge and skills in effective relationship building.
5. Exhibit the ability to conceptualize and integrate knowledge and appropriately apply that knowledge to professional practice.

Emotional and Mental Skills

6. Use sound judgment.
7. Exercise effective stress management.
8. Work well, collegially and collaboratively with others, including colleagues and clients.
9. Conduct oneself professionally consistent with NASW Code of Ethics and professional responsibility.

Communication Skills

10. Comprehend information and communicate ideas and feelings, and to communicate professionally with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals.
11. Use oral and written skills to communicate in ways that are respectful, safe, and protect the privacy of students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals.
 - a. Written skills:
 - i. Write clearly, professionally, and use correct grammar and spelling in all communication.
 - ii. Apply appropriate writing style, including current American Psychological Association (APA) referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation.
 - iii. Demonstrate sufficient skills in written English to understand content presented in the program and to complete adequately all written assignments, as specified by faculty or field supervisors.
 - b. Oral skills:
 - i. Communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals.
 - ii. Express ideas and feelings clearly.
 - iii. Communicate in spoken English to understand content presented in the program, to complete adequately all oral assignments, and to meet the objectives of field placement experiences, as specified by faculty or field supervisors.

12. Exhibit willingness and an ability to listen to others.

Interpersonal/Behavioral Skills

13. Demonstrate interpersonal skills to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and professionals and to fulfill the ethical obligations of the profession.

These include but are not limited to:

- a. Compassion
 - b. Empathy
 - c. Altruism
 - d. Integrity
 - e. Demonstration of respect for and consideration of others, including those different from oneself
 - f. Professional boundaries
 - g. Maintaining and safeguarding the confidentiality of client information, records, and communications
14. Take appropriate responsibility for own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others.
 15. Make appropriate effort toward self-improvement and adaptability.
 16. Conduct oneself in a way that characterizes honesty, integrity, and non-discrimination.
 17. Be able to develop a mature, sensitive, and effective therapeutic relationship with clients.
 18. Be adaptable to changing environments, to display flexibility, and to learn to function in the face of uncertainties inherent in the clinical problems of many clients.
 19. Demonstrate ethical behavior, including a strong commitment to the goals of social work and to the ethical standards of the profession, as specified in the NASW Code of Ethics and the Codes of Ethics for Social Work Board of Examiners in relevant jurisdictions.

20. Commit to the essential values of social work that include the respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society's resources (social justice).
21. Work effectively with others, regardless of level of authority.
22. Be receptive to feedback and supervision in a constructive manner, as well as use such feedback to enhance professional development/performance.
23. Comply with program policies, agency policies, institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in classrooms, fields, and communities.
24. Reflect a professional manner in appearance, dress, and demeanor in all academic and professional settings.
25. Demonstrate responsible and accountable behavior evidenced, for example, by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, actively engaged in class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, and keeping appointments or making timely appropriate alternative arrangements.

All candidates for selection to the Salisbury University Social Work program are required to verify they understand and can meet these technical standards with or without reasonable accommodations, aides and/or services.

I certify that I have read and understand the technical standards listed above, and I believe, to the best of my knowledge and ability, that I can meet each of these standards with or without reasonable accommodation, aides and/or services. I understand that if I am unable or unwilling to meet these standards I may not be eligible to be admitted to and/or matriculate in the social work program. I understand I should contact the relevant Program Director or Department Chair at 410-543-6305 any time I have questions or concerns with my ability to perform any of these technical standards at any time and for any reason. For more information about student accommodations, aides and/or services related to a disability, students may contact the Salisbury University Office of Student Disability Support Services 410-677-6536, TTY: 410-543-6083; disabilitysupport@salisbury.edu.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Print Name

Student ID Number

If student/prospective student is younger than 18 years old, the parent/legal guardian must sign.

Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian

Date

Print Name

Relationship to Applicant