Preface

This manual represents a compilation of the policies and procedures related to the MSW Program. We encourage you to read through it, use it often, and depend on it for a thorough understanding of the program’s rules. When you have questions, let us know. We wish you great success as you pursue the MSW program. We welcome you and look forward to greeting you as an MSW colleague at the end of your educational journey.

The Master of Social Work program within the School of Social Work was fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education in 2010 and will be accredited until 2017. It is a program with a history of concern for social justice and a strong generalist perspective. Accreditation means that our program is fully recognized by its peer schools and the Council. The program’s history means that you are entering a program that believes people can learn, grow, and change. It recognizes that people bring strengths and assets to their lives and they bring challenges as well. Some of those challenges may come from their environment and the efforts of social work must be directed both at assisting individuals with their personal challenges and removing the barriers in their environment that keep them from realizing their potential.
Introduction

Mission and Goals of the MSW Program

The School of Social Work at Rhode Island College is a center of excellence for lifelong learning in social work and human services in Rhode Island and southeastern New England. Providing the highest quality education, training and advocacy, the School is committed to achieving social and economic justice in accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics.

Vision Statement:

The School of Social Work at Rhode Island College is widely recognized for:

- Creation of learning environments that value diversity and creativity, and support for learners,
- Excellence in social work education,
- Quality training for social work practitioners,
- Successful advocacy for and with those who are oppressed and/or vulnerable,
- Contribution to knowledge development,
- Critical thinking and bold action to address social problems,
- Successful student transition to employment.

MSW Program Goals

Graduates of the MSW program will

- Engage in advanced-level social work practice that is informed by the best available evidence
- Understand the impacts of culture, oppression, and human diversity in a multi-cultural society.
- Apply social work ethical principles to guide their professional practice.
- Advance social and economic well-being and deliver effective social work services through policy practice.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment to work with individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities.
- Identify themselves as professional social workers and act accordingly.
Curriculum Structure of the MSW Program

To earn an MSW graduate degree, students must complete 62 credit hours of classroom and field work, which can be completed in 2 years as a full-time student or 4 years as a part-time student (can be extended to 6 years). Students with a BSW degree from a CSWE-accredited undergraduate program who are granted Advanced Standing must complete 33 credit hours of classroom and field work at the advanced level.

The curriculum is divided into foundation and advanced curriculum content. In the fall semester of the student’s foundation year, full-time students develop a plan of study, working with their advisor, that indicates their concentration – clinical or macro. Advanced standing students develop a plan of study during their MSW orientation. The plan of study outlines the required and elective classes that students intend to take.

Generalist Foundation Curriculum

The MSW program at the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College uses a generalist social work practice framework as its foundation. The generalist perspective stresses that the social worker focuses on social problems and human needs. The generalist approach recognizes the connection between individual problems and challenges and public issues, between the individual's well-being and the environmental conditions of their lives, and between personal and social change. The social worker should recognize that an individual client does not need to change simply because he or she has identified a problem and that the responsibility for social change is not relieved just by developing legitimate personal change objectives with a client. The generalist approach stresses that intervention should occur at the level of the system or systems that have caused or contributed to the problems. Social workers must be prepared to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The social worker must be prepared to use a variety of theories, skills and methods for client engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of the work. The curriculum of the MSW program introduces students to an understanding of basic knowledge, such as systems theory, and skills in problem solving common to both macro (societal, community, organizational) and micro (individual, family, small group) levels of practice.

Thus, the mission of the School of Social Work and the perspective of generalist practice intersect as reflected in the following definition of social work practice: the process of responding to social need to promote the achievement of the fullest human potential and to prevent or alleviate problems and disadvantage. Social work practice identifies the source(s) of the difficulty or potential for enhancement, develops professional helping relationships directed towards change, and builds upon the strengths and resources of those in need to intervene in ways that are consistent with social work values and ethics. The goals of helping are to more equitably distribute resources, empower those who are oppressed, and increase individual and societal well-being. Generalist foundation content includes social work values and ethics, diversity and oppression, advancement of social and economic justice, theories of human behavior, social work practice, research, social policy, and field education.
During the foundation year, all students participate in the following courses:

- **Human Behavior, Diversity, and Oppression**: this sequence provides students with an understanding of human development and growth in relation to structural and environmental factors that may enhance or impede functioning. It focuses on diversity and difference and calls attention to experiences of oppression and injustice.

- **Social Work Research and Evaluation and Data Analysis**: these courses introduce students to the role and value of research in social work, the development and building of evidence to inform social work practice, the ability to evaluate practice, and the initial skills to do research in social work arenas. Students complete a research plan (either quantitative or qualitative) and in the second course, students explore statistical data analysis and qualitative data analysis.

- **Generalist Foundation and Skills: Policy and Organizing I and II**: The first social policy course familiarizes students with the history of social welfare and social work, and provides a critical understanding of social policy, major social issues confronting society, and the role of the social worker. In the second course, students plan for and participate in advocacy and organizing efforts to develop skill in addressing public policy issues.

- **Generalist Foundation and Skills: Direct Practice I and II**: The social work practice sequence establishes competencies in the problem-solving approach of generalist practice. It stimulates awareness of self as a professional social worker and teaches skills for working with individuals, families, and groups. Students learn skills and practice them.

- **Field education**: offers an intensive social work practice experience in which students have opportunities for supervised direct service to client systems, as well as for involvement in advocacy and/or organizing.

**Foundation Courses**

Students are required to take the following courses in the foundation year. Full-time students complete these courses in one year. Students in the part-time program complete the courses in two years.

### Human Behavior, Diversity, and Oppression Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course #</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 520</td>
<td>Human Behavior, Diversity and Oppression I</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 522</td>
<td>Human Behavior, Diversity and Oppression II</td>
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### Social Work Research and Evaluation

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<td>Social Work Research and Evaluation I</td>
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<td>SW 542</td>
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Social Welfare Policy Sequence

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<td>Generalist Foundation and Skills: Policy and Organizing I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW 531</td>
<td>Generalist Foundation and Skills: Policy and Organizing II</td>
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Social Work Practice Sequence

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<tbody>
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<td>Generalist Foundation and Skills: Direct Practice I</td>
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<tr>
<td>SW 533</td>
<td>Generalist Foundation and Skills: Direct Practice II</td>
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Social Work Seminar and Field Placement

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SW 500</td>
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<td>SW 501</td>
<td>Field Experience and Seminar II</td>
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</table>

Course Waiver Policy for Foundation year Human Behavior and Research courses

Students who have received an A or A- in a BSW program or equivalent undergraduate or graduate courses may request to take a waiver examination for Human Behavior, Diversity and Oppression I and II (SW 520 & 521) and equivalent courses to Social Work Research and Evaluation and Data Analysis (SW 541 & 542). Students should contact the Department Chair for approval to sit for, and subsequent administration of the waiver examination.

Advanced Curriculum – Areas of Concentration

There are two areas of concentration in the second year: Clinical and Macro

Clinical Social Work Practice

The advanced clinical curriculum of the MSW program consists of two clinical practice courses (SWRK 602 and SWRK 603) and a required assessment and differential diagnosis course (SW 636). All students enroll in the professional development seminar and a clinical evaluation and case consultation course. Field placements must be related directly to the clinical concentration. Students also may choose three free electives. Current electives in the clinical concentration include a wide range of courses that focus on a varied number of issues. Please refer to our catalog to get the most updated list.
The focus of these courses is on developing and strengthening clinical social work skills, which include engagement, assessment, planning, intervention, and evaluation with individuals, couples, families or groups. Life transitions, populations at risk, and cognitive, affective and behavioral issues are examined from a person-in-situation perspective by using current theory and research. Each of the courses includes content on substance use and abuse, mood disorders, and anxiety disorders.

**Macro Social Work Practice**

The macro practice curriculum consists of two required courses on macro practice and a mandated economics course. Students enroll in SW 628: Macro Practice I: Leadership & Change and SW629: Macro Practice II: Managing people and programs. Students also take a required elective SWRK 621: Social work and the Political Economy. All students enroll in the professional development seminar and a macro research course. Field placements must be related directly to the macro concentration.

The courses focus on developing knowledge and skills for management practice in organizations and for policy practice in communities. Students learn about organizational practice through understanding human resources – hiring, supporting and evaluating staff – and a manager’s role in those processes. Students design a program; they develop a proposal for funding that includes a budget for program delivery and they identify potential funders for their projects. In the Fall, students examine the leadership styles and behaviors of others, explore their own and then identify the effect of leadership on change efforts. Students assess an organization or community’s readiness for change and in the second course, they develop a plan for bringing about change that improves or increases services to clients or client groups. The curriculum is intended to advance human rights and social and economic justice. The economics course provides context for all of this work. Macro students also take three free electives.

**Research Courses**

All students are required to complete a two-semester research course in their advanced year. The clinical research course explores clinical measures and asks students to prepare a clinical assessment and evaluation of a client’s work and to explore varied instruments for measuring clinical progress. The macro research course focuses on needs assessment and program evaluation. Students will complete an asset map of a physical or social community (e.g., a neighborhood, or the LGBT community). They will use existing data and a case study to evaluate a program’s effectiveness. These courses meet twice a month, sharing a day and time with field seminar.

**Professional Development Seminar**

All students enroll in this four-credit course that explores advanced policy, ethics and diversity content from the perspective of individual student interest. Various faculty members
will present material related to each of the topics. Students will identify an area of interest and complete assignments related specifically to their area of interest.

**Field Education and Seminar**

Students enroll in field for a 20-hour internship at the advanced level. The field seminar meets every other week, on opposite weeks from sessions for advanced research. Field seminar explores many issues regarding practice and internship, use of supervision, and professional use of self.

**Elective Courses**

Students in both concentrations have three free electives from which they can choose. Included are several 500- and 600-level courses. Students should check schedules prior to registration to determine the specific courses offered in the upcoming semester.

**Credit for Academic or Life Experience**

The MSW program does not permit academic credit for life experience or previous work experience is given in lieu of field practicum and/or social course work.

**Full-Time Program**

Students must complete two years of the required courses and elected courses, along with field education. To be considered a full time student, one must be enrolled in courses totaling nine credit hours. To complete the current 62-credit hour curriculum within a two-year period, students will need to plan on taking at least one summer or early spring course.

**Part-time Program**

The part-time program can be completed in four years (can take up to 6 years). Students enroll in Human Behavior, Diversity, and Oppression and in the research sequence in their first year in the program. During their second year, they take the policy and direct practice foundation courses and the foundation year field education seminar and placement. Students may take up to two additional years to complete their advanced or concentration year. In the third year we recommend that students enroll in the advanced practice courses and advanced field seminar and placement. Finally, in the fourth year students finish their required courses and/or their electives. By taking electives during summer sessions or in early spring semesters, part-time students can complete the program in three and one-half years.

**Advanced Standing Program**

The Advanced Standing program is available to students who have earned BSW degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The program must have been accredited at the awarding of the student’s degree. Students begin the program at the start of the advanced year, although the MSW program may require students to enroll in and
successfully complete summer bridge workshops before students begin the program. Students must complete 33 credits in field and academic courses to meet graduation requirements.

**Advanced Year Courses, Credits, and Semester Offered**

### Full-Time Program

#### Clinical Concentration

**Third Semester** (Clinical concentration full-time students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 600 Field education and seminar III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 602 Clinical social work practice I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 636 Assessment &amp; Differential Diagnosis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Summer/Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 609 Advanced Professional Development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall/Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 644 Clinical evaluation and case consultation I</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>One Free elective</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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**Fourth Semester** (Clinical concentration full-time students)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Credits</th>
<th>Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 601 Field education and seminar IV</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 603 Clinical social work practice II</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 646 Clinical evaluation and case consultation II</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Free electives</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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</table>

Total credit hours 62

#### Macro Concentration

**Third Semester** (Macro concentration full time students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 600 Field education and seminar III</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 628 Macro Practice I: Leadership and change</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 621 Social work and the political economy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 609 Advanced Professional Development</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fall/Spring/Summer</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 645 Needs assessment and Program evaluation I</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>One Free elective</td>
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**Fourth Semester** (Macro concentration full time students)

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 601 Field education and seminar IV</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 629: Macro Practice II Managing people and programs</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWRK 647 Needs assessment and Program evaluation II</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Free electives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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Total credit hours 62
Advanced Standing Program
Clinical Concentration

First Semester (Clinical concentration advanced-standing students)

SWRK 600  Field education and seminar III 4  Fall
SWRK 602 Clinical social work practice I 3  Fall
SWRK 636  Assessment & Differential Diagnosis 3  Summer/Fall
SWRK 609  Advanced Professional Development 4  Fall/Summer/Spring
SWRK 644  Clinical evaluation and case consultation I 1.5  Fall
One Free elective 3  Fall

Second Semester (Clinical concentration full-time students)

SWRK 601  Field education and seminar IV 4  Spring
SWRK 603 Clinical social work practice II 3  Spring
SWRK 646 Clinical evaluation and case consultation II 1.5  Spring
Two Free electives 6  Spring

Total credit hours 33

Macro Concentration

First Semester (Macro concentration full-time students)

SWRK 600  Field education and seminar III 4  Fall
SWRK 628 Macro Practice I: Leadership and change 3  Fall
SWRK 621  Social work and the political economy 3.0  Fall
SWRK 609  Advanced Professional Development 4  Fall/Summer/Spring
SWRK 645  Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation I 1.5  Fall
One Free elective 3  Fall

Second Semester (Macro concentration full time students)

SWRK 601  Field education and seminar IV 4  Spring
SWRK 629  Macro Practice II Managing people and programs 3  Spring
SWRK 647  Needs Assessment and Program Evaluation II 1.5  Spring
Two Free elective 6  Spring

Total credit hours 33
Part-Time Students
Clinical Concentration

Fifth semester (Clinical concentration, part-time students)

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<th>Credits</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 600</td>
<td>Field education and Seminar III</td>
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<td>SWRK 602</td>
<td>Clinical social work practice I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 636</td>
<td>Assessment &amp; Differential Diagnosis</td>
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<td>Summer/Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 644</td>
<td>Clinical evaluation and case consultation I</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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Sixth semester (Clinical concentration, Part-time students)

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<tr>
<td>SWRK 646</td>
<td>Clinical evaluation and case consultation II</td>
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Seventh semester (Clinical concentration, part-time students)

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<td>SWRK 609</td>
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<td>Summer/Fall/Spring</td>
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<td>One Free elective</td>
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Eighth semester (Clinical concentration, Part-time students)

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Macro Concentration

Fifth Semester (Macro concentration part-time students)

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<td>SWRK 600</td>
<td>Field education and Seminar III</td>
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<td>SWRK 628</td>
<td>Macro Practice I: Leadership and change</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<tr>
<td>SWRK 621</td>
<td>Social work and the political economy</td>
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<td>Fall</td>
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<td>Needs assessment and program evaluation I</td>
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Sixth Semester (Macro concentration part-time students)

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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>SWRK 629</td>
<td>Macro Practice II: Managing people and programs</td>
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<td>Spring</td>
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<td>SWRK 647</td>
<td>Needs assessment and program evaluation II</td>
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Seventh semester (Macro-concentration, part-time students)

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Eighth Semester (Macro concentration full-time students)

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<td>Spring</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total credit hours</td>
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<td>62</td>
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Academic Policies and Procedures

MSW Program Policies

Academic Advisement

All matriculated students are assigned an advisor. The MSW chair and assistant chair work with part-time students not engaged in field education. The advisor for all students who are engaged in field education is the faculty member who is a field liaison to the agency in which the student is placed. Assignment of advisors for students in field education is for one year and may change in the second year.

Completing the MSW Program

Six-year limit. Students must complete all requirements for the MSW degree within six years of initial matriculation in the program. While a student may request a leave of absence, time on leave counts toward the six-year time limit to finish the program. At the end of six years, the candidacy will be terminated, and the Records Office notified by the MSW Chair. An appeal for an extension would require the approval of the academic advisor, MSW Chair and the Dean of the School of Social Work.

Credits earned at Rhode Island College and elsewhere. Credits seven years or older may not be counted toward graduation. This applies to both Rhode Island College credits and transfer credits from other institutions. Thus, students must graduate prior to any of these credits reaching the six-year anniversary.

Retention in the MSW program.

Retention in the MSW program (FOR STUDENTS ADMITTED PRIOR TO SUMMER/FALL 2014). Any student who does not have a 3.0 GPA at the completion of the foundation year will be dismissed from the MSW program. Any student who has a grade point average (GPA) below 3.0 in any semester will be placed on academic probation.

Students dismissed due to a GPA below 3.0 who are reinstated by appeal must repeat all required courses in which they have received a grade below B.

Retention in the MSW program (FOR STUDENTS ADMITTED SUMMER/FALL 2014 AND LATER): Any student who does not have a 3.0 GPA at the completion of the foundation year will be dismissed from the MSW program. Any student who has a grade point average (GPA) below 3.0 in any semester will be placed on academic probation.

Any student who receives a grade below a B- in ANY course must repeat the course.

Students dismissed due to a GPA below 3.0 who are reinstated by appeal must repeat all required courses in which they have received a grade below B.
**Grade of F or U.** A student who receives a grade of F or U in a course is automatically dismissed from the MSW program. Such a dismissal is effective at the end of the appeal process. However, a student may not continue in classes until the outcome of a grade appeal is decided. Any grade below a C minus is equivalent to a grade of F.

**Graduation requirements.** To graduate from the MSW Program, a student must have a 3.0 (B) grade point average.

**Performance in the field.** Students who receive a grade of U for a field education course (SW 500, 501, 600, 601) are immediately dismissed from the MSW program. The faculty of the MSW program reserves the right to dismiss from the program students who give evidence (as defined by the College Handbook, the MSW program learning contracts, and/or the NASW Code of Ethics, and the school’s professional code of conduct) of an inability to secure and/or maintain a field placement and carry out field responsibilities at the master’s level. Such dismissal may be appealed to the Academic Standing Committee.

**Transfer of Credits**

**Transfer of non-social work credits.** A student may transfer a maximum of six non-social work but related graduate credits from Rhode Island College or another regionally accredited institution. These credits must have been: (a) taken within five years preceding request for transfer; (b) a graduate level only course; (c) a course for which a grade of B or better was received; (d) not applied toward receipt of another degree; and, (e) in a related discipline. All credits must meet the 7-year rule to apply to graduation.

**Student transfers from other schools of social work.** A limited number of students who have successfully completed one or two semesters of work in an accredited MSW program at another institution (30 or more credits) may be accepted into the MSW program at Rhode Island College. Transfer students may receive up to 12 transfer credits and must complete at least 50 credits in the School of Social Work as a full- or part-time student. All courses taken at another accredited MSW program will be evaluated on a course by course basis to determine the fit with the program at Rhode Island College.

**Changes in Student Status**

Normally, a full-time student will remain full-time or part-time status throughout the program and may not change from one status to another. However, if a student wishes to be considered for a change in status for the remainder of her/his enrollment, she/he must submit a written request to the chair of MSW program to change status. The chair determines whether or not a change in status will be permitted.

**Leave of absence**

Students who are not registered in a given semester must request a leave of absence in order to maintain their status as a matriculated student in the MSW program. Request for
a leave of absence must be submitted to the chair of the MSW program, giving specific reasons for the request with a tentative date for return and plan for completion of the program prior to the beginning of the requested semester. The maximum request is for a one-year leave.

**Independent Study**

Students registering for an Independent Study must complete the Independent Study Form. The form must contain a full description of the subject to be pursued as well as a description of the outcome and method of evaluation. The form must be signed by the dean and the instructor who will supervise the project.

**Report of Incomplete**

A report of Incomplete shall be given in place of a grade when the work for the semester has been passing but has not been completed because of illness or some other reason that, in the opinion of the instructor, justifies such a report.

- The student must initiate the request prior to the last week of class, unless the instructor has specified an earlier deadline in the course syllabus, in which case, the instructor’s earlier deadline date supersedes the last week of class.
- Normally the student must initiate a request for an I grade; however, in extreme circumstances, faculty members may assign this grade at their discretion, i.e., without discussing it with the student.
- Incompletes are appropriate only if some or most of the work has already been completed and the student is able to complete the remaining requirements with a minimum of faculty supervision by the beginning of the next semester or by its end, depending on the course.
- The student and faculty member will reach an agreement regarding the work that the student should complete to obtain a final grade, including the following:
  - the contents of the work that needs to be completed;
  - the date that the work will be completed: (College policy requires that all Incompletes be completed by the end of the next semester; in the MSW program, this policy applies except where successful completion of one course is a prerequisite to enrollment in the next semester, e.g., enrolling in SW 522 requires successful completion of SW 520.
  - the grade that will be assigned if the work is not completed.
- Contracts for approved Incompletes must be completed and signed by the student, the instructor and the department chair, and placed in the student's folder prior to assigning a grade of I.

**Grade Grievances**

Students who believe they have received a grade that does not represent their efforts or results and wish to obtain a change of grade must contact the faculty member first within 14 days of receiving notice of the grade, to discuss their rationale for requesting a change of grade. The student and faculty member should meet in person for this discussion.
If, after such a meeting, the matter of the grade is unresolved, the student should write a letter to the MSW program chair requesting re-consideration of the grade. The letter should contain relevant information about the student’s rationale, understanding of the faculty member’s response, and an indication of the change the student is requesting.

The program/department chair will schedule a meeting with the student within 14 days to provide an opportunity for discussion. At the chair’s discretion, the faculty member may be invited to the meeting.

Following the meeting, the chair will respond to the student in writing within seven days. The letter will state the chair’s decision. If the student is still dissatisfied she or he may appeal to the vice-president for academic affairs.

**Academic Standing Committee Description and Procedures**

**Composition of the Committee**

The School of Social Work maintains an ongoing Academic Standing Committee. The Committee shall consist of up to eight members:

- Two (2) BSW Faculty  
- Up to Two (2) BSW Students
- Two (2) MSW Faculty  
- Up to Two (2) MSW Students

The faculty members are elected by the School of Social Work faculty and serve two year terms. The chair of the committee is elected from among the faculty representatives who are in their second year on the committee. The chairs of the BSW and MSW departments cannot serve on the Academic Standing Committee. The student representatives will be selected by the respective student organization.

**Committee Responsibility**

The Academic Standing Committee is charged with:

- Hearing all appeals/grievances, with the exception of grade disputes;
- Hearing cases of alleged unethical behavior involving students
- Recommending resolution of appeals/grievances to the appropriate program chair;

The Academic Standing Committee may review any student's performance in relation to the application of the above policies. Dismissals from the MSW program and other consequences of the policies stated in this manual may be appealed to the School of Social Work Academic Standing Committee.

**Procedures of the Committee**

- Students have the right to freedom from disciplinary action without due process and can appeal any adverse action.
- If students believe that the Committee’s recommendation provides no support for their concern, they may appeal the recommendation to the appropriate program/department chair in the School of Social Work.
- An appeal of the decision of the chair can be made to the Dean.
Appeals to the Committee

- Appeals to the Committee must be submitted in writing to the chair of the Committee and all materials must be fully documented.
- The appeals/grievance statement must include a summary of not more than one written page stating the specific policy or policies violated or the exact nature of the grievance, the specific actions upon which the appeal is based, and the remedy being sought. Supplementary materials may be presented to support the grievance.
- Types of student grievances:
  - Violation of established academic policies and regulations (e.g., examination policies, advisement policies, and registration policies).
  - Violation of student's academic freedom.
  - Grievance related to violations of the NASW Code of Ethics, the school’s professional code of conduct, or the Rhode Island College policies on academic honesty, Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action or Illegal Harassment.
  - Appeal of dismissal from the program.

The student will discuss the grievance with the faculty or staff member involved who will attempt to resolve the grievance and render a written decision to the student within five working days of the faculty member's receipt of the grievance. Copies also will be forwarded to the chair of the appropriate department in the School of Social Work and the Academic Standing Committee of the School of Social Work.

The grievance should be presented in person to the faculty member involved as soon as possible after the grievant feels that an abridgement of the grievant's rights has occurred, but in no case shall it be later than ten working days following the grievant's knowledge of the act, event, or commencement of the conditions which are the basis for the grievance.

If the grievance is not resolved, the student may submit the grievance in writing, within five working days of the grievant's receipt of the decision of the faculty member involved, to the Academic Standing Committee. Within five working days of receipt of the appeal, the Academic Standing Committee will schedule a hearing, notifying the student and the faculty member(s) of the time and place of the hearing (see Hearing Procedure).

In the case of a dismissal from either the BSW program or the MSW program, the student must submit a written appeal outlining the reasons for the appeal to the chair of the Academic Standing Committee within five working days of receipt of notification of dismissal. Within five working days of receipt of the appeal, the Academic Standing Committee will schedule a hearing, notifying the student and the faculty member(s) of the time and place of the hearing (see Hearing Procedure). Reasonable efforts, including certified mail, non-certified mail, e-mail, and attempted phone contact will be made to notify the student.

If a student is dismissed from the program he/she cannot enroll in or attend classes pending results of the appeal.
Hearing Procedure

- Prior to the hearing, the chair of the Committee shall notify the affected parties in writing by certified mail, outlining the concerns before the committee. All written materials must be available to the Committee members and affected parties 48 hours before the hearing. The student shall notify the chairperson 48 hours before the hearing who his/her advocate(s) will be. (See advocate bullet, below)

- Prior to the hearing, the student and involved parties have the right of access to all information that will be used by the Committee in the hearing.

- All material(s) distributed at the hearing will be returned to the chair of the Committee at the conclusion of the hearing. This material will be stamped confidential and is not for distribution. The material will be placed in a file in the dean's office.

- The chair of the Academic Standing Committee will ensure that materials prepared for Committee members and others contain all necessary copies of pertinent information.

- Hearings will be conducted in an informal manner, with both the student and members of the Committee having the right to question all participants on relevant matters.

- The student has the right to be present throughout the entire hearing, except during the deliberation and final voting of the Committee. S/he has the right not to testify or appear, though the Committee will proceed with its deliberations and recommendations. However, any committee member may request an executive session at any time; in that case all non-Committee members will be asked to leave.

- Students may select an advocate to appear with them at the hearing. The advocate may be a School of Social Work faculty member, field instructor, staff member, or another student. The advocate does not have voting privileges. Under no circumstances will legal counsel be permitted.

- Witnesses may elect not to make verbal presentations, but rather submit a written statement, which must be submitted to the chair 48 hours prior to the hearing.

- Once people are finished presenting collateral information, they will leave the hearing room.

- Recommendations of the committee will be approved by majority vote of the faculty representatives, though consensus will be sought.

- The chair of the Committee will send the student written notification of the Committee’s recommendation by certified and regular mail within five working days. A copy of the decision will be forwarded to the MSW department chair and the student’s faculty field advisor.
Appeals of the recommendation(s) made by the Academic Standing Committee must be instituted in writing within five working days of the date of receipt of the recommendation(s) to the chair of the MSW department of the School of Social Work. All appeals must be based upon existing documentation and no new materials may be presented.

The Chair of the MSW department of the School of Social Work will either accept or reject the decision of the committee. The chair will notify the student in writing of her/his acceptance or rejection within five working days of the receipt of the decision from the committee.

Appeal of the chair's decision may be made to the Dean of the School of Social Work. Appeals must be instituted within five working days of the receipt of the chair's decision. The appeal must be in writing and must explicitly identify the basis for appeal. All appeals must be based upon existing documentation and no new materials may be presented.

Appeal of the Dean's decision will be made to the Dean of Graduate Studies. Appeal of the Dean of Graduate Studies can be made to the Vice President of Academic Affairs [See College Student Handbook, Chapter 3 for procedure. Here is the link: http://www.ric.edu/academics/pdf/College_handbook_Chapter_3.pdf].

Policy on Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words of another as your own without quotation marks and/or use of another person’s ideas without citation. Use of material from the web or online sources without citation is strictly forbidden. Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and is grounds for dismissal from the MSW program.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is the foundation of the academic community. Students who violate College rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure or removal from a course, disciplinary probation, and/or dismissal from the College. Individual schools may have additional standards and policies related to academic honesty. 
(a) Examples of Academic Dishonesty include (but are not limited to):

- Cheating: intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- Plagiarism: intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. The following are examples of plagiarism: 
  1. Word-for-word plagiarism: This includes (a) the submission of another student's work as one's own; (b) the submission of work from any source whatever (print or electronic)
without proper acknowledgement by footnote or reference within the text of the paper; (c) the submission of any part of another's work without proper use of quotation marks.

**ii. Patchwork plagiarism:** This consists of a piecing together of unacknowledged phrases and sentences quoted verbatim (or nearly verbatim) from a variety of sources. The mere reshuffling of other people's words does not constitute original work.

**iii. Unacknowledged paraphrase:** It is perfectly legitimate to set forth another author's facts or ideas in one's own words, but if one is genuinely indebted to the other author for these facts or ideas, the debt must be acknowledged by footnote or reference within the text of the paper (e.g., the above paragraphs are based largely on Sears, Harbrace *Guide to the Library and Research Paper*, p. 39).

Many facts, ideas, and expressions are considered to be in the public domain or general knowledge and need not be acknowledged (e.g., the fact that the Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776; the idea that universal public education is essential to the survival of democratic institutions; such proverbial expressions as "A rolling stone gathers no moss," or "New York is a great place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there,") but as a general rule, when one is in doubt, it is best to acknowledge the source.

- **Collusion:** facilitating academic dishonesty intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

- **Deception:** Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise, e.g. giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work.

- **Sabotage:** Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or willfully disrupting the experiments of others.

- **Multiple Submissions:** Submitting for credit, when a student has not been given permission to do so, any work that is the same or substantially the same as work that has been submitted for credit in another course. Many professors allow re-working or building on prior work; however, multiple submissions are permitted only with the prior permission of the instructor(s), and only when the student acknowledges the multiple submission in the work itself.

(b) **Faculty Role**

The faculty member has two clearly defined roles: first, to establish preventive measures; and, second, to ensure that detected instances of academic dishonesty are dealt with appropriately and reported.

Preventive measures should include a statement to each class by the faculty member outlining expected standards of intellectual honesty and the necessity for such standards. The faculty member should also maintain reasonable security of all examination materials and procedures. Generally, the faculty member should employ any reasonable methods to discourage acts of academic dishonesty.
A faculty member may take action up to and including failing a student accused of academic dishonesty. Some often-used penalties include:

   i. A low or failing grade on the assignment in which the offense occurred.
   ii. An additional assignment.
   iii. Reduction of the final grade up to and including failure.
   iv. Any combination of the above.

In all cases, a report describing the nature of the dishonesty and the subsequent action taken by the faculty member shall be filed with the Vice President for Academic Affairs. If this is a first violation, unless egregious, the complaint will simply remain in a file in the VPAA’s office. However, if a student has more than one reported incident (either in the same course or in different courses), the student will have a hearing from the Academic Standing Committee at the School of Social Work. Additionally, the faculty member may recommend that the student have a hearing in front of the Academic Integrity Board (http://www.ric.edu/aib/).

(c) Vice President for Academic Affairs Role
The Vice president for Academic Affairs shall maintain a file of any and all reports of academic dishonesty. At the discretion of the vice president for academic affairs and depending upon the severity of the infraction, the student may be informed in writing about possible consequences of further infractions.

In the case of multiple infractions, the vice president for academic affairs will refer the student’s name to the Academic Integrity Board for review and possible action.

d) Academic Integrity Board’s Role
The Board shall consider cases referred to it by a faculty member or the vice president for academic affairs, and has the option to recommend any of the penalties ranging from those available to the faculty member to placing the student on academic probation or expelling the student from the College.

   i. Appeal
   Any student accused of academic dishonesty may appeal action taken by the instructor in a case to the Board.

   ii. Appeals Procedure
   ▪ Appeals or referrals to the Board will follow the standard procedure of the Board.
   ▪ The Board shall inform the student, the faculty member, and Vice President for Academic Affairs of its decision.
   ▪ A record of the cases concerning academic dishonesty will be kept in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.
   ▪ A student may appeal the decision of the Board (concerning academic dishonesty) to the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Appeals may be considered on the basis of new information or procedural errors.

Freedom of Expression
The faculty of the School of Social Work MSW department recognizes the right of all members of the academic community – including students, faculty, and staff – to express their
opinions. The MSW Department faculty has a commitment to engage students in critical examination of diverse ideological views, particularly with respect to their relationship to social work values. Discussion and debate about diverse ideological views should be conducted in a manner that respects the rights of others, consistent with the values, ethical principles, and ethical standards contained in the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Criteria for Evaluating Academic Work

A. Written Work: Writing is an essential skill for social work practice. Students must carefully proofread their papers for typographical, grammatical, sentence structure, and spelling errors. The paper must begin with an introductory statement of purpose and an overview of the ideas to be presented. The ideas must be discussed in a coherent, logical, well-organized manner and must be supported by one's own arguments, by research findings, and theoretical discussions from relevant literature, when appropriate. Each aspect of the assignment must be thoroughly addressed. Citations and a reference list in proper form must be included. These aspects of the paper are stressed in addition to the substantive content because it is important that social workers know how to communicate with clients and other professionals in writing that is concise, clear, organized and properly documented.

B. Class Presentations: The purposes of the presentation are made clear at the beginning. The presentation is well organized and articulately delivered. The presenter's manner is engaging. The presentation shows self-awareness, practice insights and skills, ample integration of theoretical material from the readings and class discussions. The presenter skillfully manages group discussion, by effectively eliciting it, focusing it, summarizing it, and explicitly connecting it to the presentation's stated purposes. Handouts are written clearly, articulately, concisely, and are germane to the topic.

C. Attendance and Class Participation: The student is expected to behave in a way that demonstrates that she or he has integrated the core values and skills of the profession. This means that the student attends each class session, arriving on time. Students who must be late or absent (because of illness, for example), are expected to contact their instructor to inform her/him of the absence and plan to complete work they have missed. The following policy applies to all classes in the MSW program:

Attendance is crucial both your learning experience and the learning experiences of your peers. Students are expected to attend all class meetings. Students who miss more than three hours of class time may not earn a passing grade for the course.

The student's oral participation should show an ability to make conscious, purposeful use of self in interactions within the classroom; awareness of her or his own feelings, behaviors, and motivations; receptiveness to feedback and an ability to integrate feedback into behavioral change; an ability to make appropriate use of “air time” in class, i.e., willingness both to use it and to limit one's use of it; a respect for difference and for others' feelings, including a nonjudgmental attitude, sensitivity to ethnic diversity and oppressed groups, respect for confidentiality and client self-determination; an ability to contribute comments that are clearly
stated and immediately germane to the focal issues under discussion; and an ability to use the
group to meet one's own needs, while respecting the needs of others. The student's comments
should show that assigned readings were completed on time and were understood, that opinions
are supported with data and/or logical argument and that class content is integrated with field
experiences.

For additional criteria for evaluating student performance, see the School of Social Work
policies below regarding (1) confidentiality in the classroom and (2) professional behavior.

D. Special Learning Needs: Students with special learning needs should inform their
instructors, advisor, and field supervisor early in the semester so that needed accommodations
can be made to facilitate learning. Students who require accommodation because of a disability
are encouraged to contact the Office of Disability Services in Craig-Lee Hall or call the office at
(401) 456-2776 or visit their website at http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/.

Disability

The School of Social Work is committed to removing learning barriers and facilitating
inclusion throughout its curricula, specifically in the classroom learning environment and in field
education. We wish to offer an integrative, accepting, and facilitating environment that is
conducive to learning and professional growth for all students including those with disabilities.
Students who have disabling conditions are entitled to reasonable accommodation. Faculty and
staff are available to meet individually with students who require accommodation and maintain
confidentiality. We strongly encourage students to self-identify and contact the Office of
Disability Services, Craig Lee Hall (401-456-2776). The Office of Disability Services is the
central resource for students with disabilities on campus. Staff makes every effort to verify and
coordinate learning needs with faculty and to advocate for changes in policies and procedures.
By contacting this office and registering, students will learn about the special services and
equipment available to them. Moreover, registration assures student compliance with guidelines
requiring reasonable accommodation.

Confidentiality

The faculty of the School of Social Work recognizes the value and importance of each
student's right to confidentiality. Students may request that specific information shared with
individual members of the faculty, field instructors, and/or academic administrators is kept
confidential.

The School of Social Work regards faculty, faculty advisors, field instructors, and school
administrators as members of each student's educational team who may be consulted periodically
to discuss student progress. There are routine reviews of student progress at monthly MSW
faculty meetings. Information shared confidentially by a student will be shared with other team
members only when a team member deems it necessary to address a student's educational needs.
The procedure for sharing such information will be to first inform the student of the issue to be
discussed; only after that will the issues/concerns be discussed. Discussions will include those
individuals directly concerned with the issue, such as the dean of the School of Social Work, the
chair of the department, the faculty concerned, the student's advisor, and/or the director of Field
Education.
If a faculty member is unable to notify a student ahead of time, in person, the faculty member will attempt to reach the student by e-mail or phone. If contact is still not made, the faculty member will send a written notice, return receipt requested, to the student’s address on file with the MSW program. A follow-up meeting will be scheduled with the student.

The faculty of the School of Social Work recognizes the value and importance of free and open classroom discussion. Students are encouraged to express opinions and offer observations relevant to course content. In sharing information about others (e.g., clients in their practice), students are expected to protect the confidentiality of those individuals. Other students in the classroom are expected to treat classmates’ comments with respect and courtesy, and to protect the confidentiality of comments and observations offered in the classroom, to the extent possible under law and college/school policy. Students are expected to refrain from divulging content of classroom discussion to others outside of the classroom. The confidentiality of classroom discussion cannot be guaranteed because of “duty to protect” and “mandatory reporting” laws and/or other policies that may require disclosure.

In writing papers and in class discussions it is important for students to disguise any potentially identifying information about clients.

**Professional Behavior**

Students matriculating at the School of Social Work are preparing for entry into the profession of social work. The behavior of professional social workers is guided by the *NASW Code of Ethics* and students are expected to act in accord with that professional code throughout their period of matriculation, including but not limited to both field and classroom related learning. Failure to behave in accord with the *Code of Ethics* or the Professional Code of Conduct described below may result in review and action by the School of Social Work Academic Standing Committee.

The following framework guides the policy on professional conduct. Failure to meet generally accepted standards of professional conduct, personal integrity or emotional stability requisite for professional practice, inappropriate or disruptive behavior toward colleagues, faculty, or staff (at school or field placement) will be the basis for nonacademic termination policies (Council on Social Work Education, Commission on Accreditation, Supplement to the Handbook of Accreditation Standards and Procedures).


**Ethical Obligations**

Students are ethically and professionally bound to:

- adhere to the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) *Code of Ethics*
- appreciate the value of diversity by demonstrating effective and nonjudgmental relationships and working with others who are different from oneself; and
- adhere to issues of confidentiality as they relate to human services, classroom activities, and field placement.
Students are required to meet all of the following requirements to maintain good standing:

**Professional Commitment**
- 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*. Behavior judged to be in violation of the current NASW Code of Ethics may result in a consultative review and/or administrative action by the Academic Standing Committee.
- A demonstrated commitment to the essential values of social work, which include respect for the dignity and worth of every individual and his/her right to a just share of society’s resources (social justice).

**Professional Behavior**
- Behaviors that are in compliance with program policies, institutional policies, professional ethics standards, and societal laws in classroom, field, and community.
- Appearance and personal demeanor reflect a professional manner.
- Sound judgment in decision making.
- Potential for responsible and accountable behavior by knowing and practicing within the scope of social work, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, prioritizing responsibilities, attending class regularly, observing deadlines, completing assignments on time, keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements, and accepting supervision and critique in a positive manner.
- Work and communication with others that is intended to resolve issues in a manner that is direct, professional, and geared toward problem resolution while avoiding triangulation.
- Advocacy for him/herself undertaken in an appropriate and responsible manner using proper channels for conflict resolution.
- Willingness to receive and accept classroom feedback and field supervision in a positive manner to enhance professional development.
- Professional and respectful interpersonal behavior with colleagues, faculty, and staff in class and field.

**Personal Behavior**

**Stress Management**
- Ability to deal with current life stress through the use of appropriate coping mechanisms when stress interferes with scholastic and professional performance.
- Use of appropriate self-care and supportive relationships with colleagues, peers, and others when stress affects scholastic and professional performance.

**Emotional Problems**
- Use of help for problems that interfere with scholastic and professional performance.
- Recognition of need to engage in counseling or seek support and help if personal problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties result in any of the following:
  - compromising scholastic and other performance;
  - interfering with professional judgment and behavior;
jeopardizing the best interests of those to whom the social work student has a professional responsibility (as outlined in the NASW Code of Ethics)

Harassment

The School of Social Work will not tolerate any form of harassment, which includes the following:

- Conduct that intimidates, threatens, or endangers the health or safety of any person.
- Behavior that intentionally or negligently causes physical, financial, or emotional harm to any person.
- Behaviors such as prank phone calls or abuse/harassment of others through electronic means.

Oppression

In accordance with the NASW Code of Ethics, the faculty of the school of social work condemns any and all oppression of individuals or groups on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age or handicapping condition. In addition, we reaffirm the code's precepts that social workers have a duty to fight discrimination and other forms of injustice.

Illegal Harassment

The School of Social Work believes that its students, faculty and staff should have the right to study and work in a college community that is free from any types of harassment. We show the college’s harassment policy below. Following that, we show the college’s complaint policy so that students understand their remedies, should they encounter any type of harassment.

Illegal Harassment Policy

In accordance with its policy of Nondiscrimination, Rhode Island College prohibits sexual harassment and harassment on the basis of race, color, creed, national or ethnic origin, religion, disability, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or citizenship status.

Sexual harassment is a form of gender discrimination and is a violation of State and Federal law.

Sexual harassment is defined to include unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Such conduct is prohibited when the behavior is directed to an individual because of his or her gender and (1) when submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of instruction, employment or otherwise full participation in College life; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct is considered in evaluating a person's academic work or job performance; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with a person's academic or job performance or creating a sexually intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Complaints about illegal harassment will be responded to promptly. Retaliation against an individual bringing a complaint of illegal harassment constitutes a violation of College policy.
as well as state and federal law. An individual found guilty of illegal harassment or retaliation, or any individual who initiates a fraudulent claim of harassment, shall be subject to disciplinary action. All persons who believe that they are or may have been victims of illegal harassment are encouraged to seek resolution promptly through the established informal and formal procedures of the College as set forth in the Complaint Resolution Policy.

Individuals seeking information regarding illegal harassment may consult with any of the following offices or individuals for advice and assistance.(A list can be obtained by clicking here.) Those who have been witness to illegal harassment should report their observations as well.

All employees of Rhode Island College are expected to make every effort to ensure that students and fellow employees are not subjected to any form of sexual or other illegal harassment. This effort may be formal or informal, depending on the circumstances.

Students who engage in illegal harassment off College premises at College related activities will be subject to discipline in accordance with the Code of Student Conduct (see Student Handbook).

Confidentiality will be respected during all complaint procedures to the degree the procedure will allow. However, if an employee or student wishes to bring a complaint and remain anonymous, the ability of the College to respond may be limited.

The Affirmative Action Office has institutional responsibility for monitoring the College's compliance with applicable state and federal laws prohibiting discrimination in the form of illegal harassment.

College officials receiving complaints of illegal harassment should report the same to the Affirmative Action Office so that effective monitoring of illegal harassment incidents can take place.

Students and employees shall retain their right to seek resolution for alleged illegal harassment by filing a complaint with responsible state and federal civil rights agencies:

R.I. Commission for Human Rights  
180 Westminster Street, Third Floor  
Providence, RI 02903  
Tel: 401-222-2661  
http://www.richr.state.ri.us/

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)  
John F. Kennedy Federal Building  
475 Government Center  
Boston, MA 02203  
(617)565-3200 or 1-800-669-4000  
https://www.eeoc.gov/field/boston/
Complaint Resolution Policy

Rhode Island College affirms its commitment to ensuring an environment for all students and employees that is fair, humane, and respectful; an environment that supports and rewards students and employees on the basis of relevant considerations, and which is free from discriminatory, inappropriate, and disrespectful conduct or communication. As an institution of higher education dedicated to fostering and upholding higher order values of human dignity and respect for the individual, Rhode Island College expects standards of professional behavior that exceed those minimally prescribed by law.

In an instance of perceived violation of the College policies, a member of the College community may file a complaint. In pursuing a complaint, the individual may be accompanied and otherwise assisted by an advisor/advocate from within the College community. The advisor shall not act as an attorney. Should any of the parties retain legal counsel, counsel may not be present at any level of the complaint called for by these procedures. College employees governed by collective bargaining agreements may pursue perceived violations of those agreements according to the grievance procedures set forth in them.

Confidentiality and privacy of those involved will be respected during all complaint procedures to the degree the procedure will allow. If an individual wishes to bring a complaint of discrimination, including a complaint alleging sexual harassment, and remain anonymous, the College's ability to respond will be limited. Nevertheless, any individual who believes he or she has been the victim of discrimination is encouraged to discuss the matter with the College's director of Affirmative Action or any other administrator with whom he/she feels comfortable. Consultations will be confidential to the full extent permitted by law.

This policy provides two avenues for pursuing a complaint: an Informal Resolution Procedure and a Formal Resolution Procedure. An individual may utilize either or both of these avenues of resolution. The College will maintain records and monitor all complaints at all levels. In the case of Affirmative Action complaints, all records are required to be retained for monitoring purposes.

Policy Advising
Individuals seeking information regarding the process of complaint resolution may consult with any of the following offices or individuals for advice and assistance. (A list can be obtained by clicking here.)

Informal Resolution Procedure
Members of the College community normally are encouraged to seek an informal resolution of their complaints. This informal procedure is intended to encourage communication between the parties involved, either directly or through an intermediary, in order to facilitate a mutual understanding of what may be different perspectives regarding the complained of action or behavior, and to find a solution.
If the complainant is a student, the complaint shall be handled by the Dean of Students. Purely academic complaints shall be handled in accordance with the College's academic grievance policies that are outlined in the Student Handbook (see Appendix B).

If the complainant is an employee, the complaint normally shall be handled by the employee’s immediate supervisor. If the immediate supervisor is the subject of the complaint, the complainant may file the informal complaint with another person in the administrative chain of command.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, a record of a complaint alleging discrimination shall be reported to the Director of Affirmative Action so that the College may maintain a record of all complaints filed.

If the informal process does not result in the resolution of the complaint to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complainant may utilize the formal complaint procedure.

**Formal Resolution Procedure**

Any member of the College community may submit a formal complaint alleging a violation of College policy to the appropriate administrator at any time. However, time limits contained in law or contracts may limit the College's ability to respond fully.

Purely academic complaints shall be handled in accordance with the College's academic grievance policies and are not covered by this policy. Those policies and procedures may be found in the Student Handbook (see Appendix B).

**Filing a Formal Complaint**

A formal complaint shall be in writing and shall set forth a statement of the facts, the College policy/policies or practice/practices violated, and the specific remedy sought. The complaint normally shall be filed as follows:

- If the complaint alleges discrimination, including illegal harassment, the complaint shall be filed with the Interim Director of Affirmative Action, Maggie Sullivan, Roberts Hall 314, telephone # 456-8218, email: affirmativeaction@ric.edu or msullivan@ric.edu.
- If the complaint is a non-academic student issue, the complaint shall be filed with the Dean of Students, Scott Kane, Craig-Lee 127, telephone # 456-8061, email: skane@ric.edu.
- All other complaints shall be filed with the Interim Director of Human Resources, Maggie Sullivan, Roberts Hall 314, telephone # 456-8218, email: affirmativeaction@ric.edu or msullivan@ric.edu.

These College offices shall forward the complaint to the appropriate dean or director for Step 1 resolution. They shall also continue to monitor and coordinate its resolution.

If the complaint is against a dean or director, Step 1 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the grievance shall be filed with the appropriate vice president.
If the complaint is against a vice president, Step 1 and Step 2 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the complaint shall be filed directly with the president.

If the complaint is against the president, Step 1, Step 2, and Step 3 of the complaint procedure shall be by-passed and the complaint shall be filed with the Board of Governors who shall deal with the complaint through an ad hoc procedure.

If the College determines that a complaint is well-founded and that the respondent has engaged in inappropriate conduct, disciplinary action may be imposed (and formally effectuated, as required, by an appointing authority) ranging from an oral reprimand to termination of employment or expulsion from the College.

Hearings
Step 1
Absent extraordinary circumstances, the dean or director to whom the complaint has been forwarded shall, within seven (7) calendar days of receiving the complaint, conduct a formal conference with the complainant, permitting her or him to provide any necessary relevant information. The dean or director shall also meet with the respondent and conduct such additional investigation as he or she deems necessary. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written recommendation shall be rendered within seven (7) calendar days of the first formal conference. The recommendation shall be sent to the complainant and respondent. The written recommendation shall state the background information, the rationale for the recommendation, and the recommended remedy (if any). No transcript or recording of the conference shall be made by either party. For monitoring purposes, a copy of the recommendation shall be sent to the College officer who received the initial complaint.

Step 2
If the complaint is not resolved at Step 1, the complainant or respondent may, within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the Step 1 recommendation, appeal to the vice president administratively responsible for the unit of the College in which the alleged policy violation/s occurred.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the vice president shall hold a hearing within fourteen (14) calendar days of receipt of the appeal or complaint. Absent extraordinary circumstances, a written recommendation shall be rendered within fourteen (14) calendar days of such hearing. The complainant and the respondent shall be afforded the opportunity to testify, to call witnesses and to introduce documentary evidence. The vice president may review any evidence gathered at the Step 1 level, (including the Step 1 recommendation), and shall, if that evidence is deemed relevant and probative, make it available to the parties. Hearsay evidence, including out-of-hearing statements, if deemed reliable by the vice president, may be introduced but will normally be accorded less weight than the testimony of live witnesses. No formal cross examination by the parties shall be permitted. No transcript or recording shall be made of the hearing. For monitoring purposes a copy of the recommendation shall be sent to the College officer who received the initial complaint.
Step 3

In the event that the complaint is not resolved at Step 2, the complainant or respondent may file an appeal with the president within fourteen days of the receipt of the Step 2 recommendation.

Absent extraordinary circumstances, the president shall, within seven (7) calendar days, refer the case to the Complaint Hearing Panel. The Complaint Hearing Panel shall consist of three (3) persons, one of whom shall be designated chair, chosen from a standing panel appointed annually by the President. The standing panel shall consist of twelve (12) College employees representing administrators, faculty, and staff. The Complaint Hearing Panel shall be formed as follows: one person shall be appointed by the president and designated chair, one person shall be appointed by the complainant, and one person shall be appointed by the respondent. Any member of the panel whose term of appointment expires during the course of the hearing shall continue to serve until completion of the hearing and rendering of a recommendation. The Step 3 hearing shall be held as soon as practicable and normally within twenty-one days of referral by the President. The complainant and the respondent shall have the right to call witnesses, to testify and to present relevant documentary evidence. The complainant and the respondent shall have the right to cross-examine all witnesses, subject to the supervision of the Panel. The Panel may review any evidence gathered at the Step 1 or Step 2 level, (including the Step 1 and 2 recommendation), and may, in its discretion, make that available to the parties. Hearsay evidence, including out-of-hearing statements, if deemed reliable by the Panel, may be introduced but will normally be accorded less weight than the testimony of live witnesses. A tape recording of the proceeding shall be made and a copy shall be provided, at cost, to the complainant and to the respondent. Following the hearing, the Panel shall render a report and recommendation to the president, absent extraordinary circumstances, within twenty-one (21) calendar days following the hearing. The report shall contain specific findings of fact and recommendations. Upon consideration of the report and recommendation, the president shall render a decision in writing and communicate the same to the complainant, the respondent, and to the College monitoring officer. The president’s decision shall be final.

While this procedure is generic and therefore available to address any concerns of members of the College Community, it is intended to be of particular use to those persons seeking to vindicate rights accorded them pursuant to the College's Nondiscrimination and Affirmative Action Policy. More specifically, this policy constitutes the grievance mechanism called for by the regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Title IX (barring sex discrimination), Title VI (barring discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin); and Title VII (barring discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, or national origin).

Liability Insurance

Rhode Island College carries insurance that covers all students during their tenure in the program, including work in the field. However, we recommend, but do not require, that you consider obtaining your own individual liability insurance if you are concerned about specific protection. The National Association for Social Workers (NASW) offers insurance for social workers. You can check out requirements and costs at http://www.naswassurance.org/.
Student Records

Student academic and health records are maintained by Rhode Island College at the following locations and with the following custodians:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Custodian</th>
</tr>
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| Student Records | Records Office 401-456-8213 | Director of Records  
Building 4  
600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.  
Providence, RI 02908 |
| Health Records  | Health Services 401-456-8055 | Director of Health Services  
Browne Dorm  
600 Mt. Pleasant Ave.  
Providence, RI 02908 |

If you have questions regarding your records, you should refer to one of the offices shown above.