



St. Olaf College

**Social Work Program Manual/Student
Handbook**

**Department of Social Work
and
Family Studies**

Accredited by the Council on Social Work Education

1990 – 2023

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INTRODUCTION

The Social Work Program Manual is intended to acquaint social work majors with St. Olaf's undergraduate social work program. The Manual serves the following purposes:

1. To introduce new majors to the Social Work Program
2. To serve as a resource to students in curriculum planning
3. To articulate the policies and procedures of the Program
4. To describe the activities and opportunities of the Program

This Manual is intended for use in partnership with the St. Olaf College Catalog and the Social Work Program Field Manual. In planning your course of study you should become familiar with these manuals and the college catalog. If ever they are in conflict the Catalog takes precedence.

Your academic advisor can also be of help to you in learning about Social Work. Your advisor should be a member of the social work faculty who will help you design or plan your program. Take the time to get to know your advisor and set up an appointment if you have questions about your courses or the social work profession in general. Another useful resource for you is the student group Social Workers and the Greater Good (SWAGG) and the members who comprise it. This is the student organization for social work and family studies students. There is more about the group later in the manual. We hope you will join and become an active member.

Social work can be an exciting, challenging, and rewarding profession. Social work is a vocation helping people to find ways to live more satisfying and productive lives. Social work has a powerful tradition of social action, and if you want to be on the cutting edge of change in our society, social work is an important route to that goal. According to the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), "The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, with a particular focus on those who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty."

In order to enhance human well-being and help meet basic and complex needs of all people, social workers work with families, groups, organizations, and communities, as well as with individuals. Social workers aim to enhance the strengths of clients in relationship with their environment. The reason for this is that social workers recognize that the ability of people to live satisfying and productive lives is very much influenced by their environment – their families, friends, organizations with which they interact, local communities, American society and the global community. Yet, there are many problems and circumstances that interfere with the efforts of people to live satisfying lives. These include family violence, marital and family disruption, health problems, mental illness, structural white supremacy and other forms of oppression, alcohol and drug abuse, or poverty, to name a few.

Social workers are not educated to spend their lives solely counseling people one on one, although they may spend much of their time helping individuals to change. Social workers are just as interested in helping to develop a more humane and just society for everyone.

To implement these purposes, social workers are employed in an ever-expanding spectrum of human service organizations and programs. Among the organizations where St. Olaf's social work graduates are employed are healthcare settings, programs for people with disabilities, public social services, refugee programs, family service agencies, women's centers, residential treatment centers for children and adolescents, and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

To be effective generalist social workers, students must master a wide range of knowledge from the social and natural sciences and other liberal arts disciplines. Social workers must also learn a broad array of helping skills and approaches. It is important that social workers understand and identify with the values and goals of the social work profession. Probably the most fundamental value of the social work profession is the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of all people. An allied belief is the view that society has the responsibility to ensure that all people have access to the opportunities for developing as fully as possible their potential as human beings.

Social work has a well-articulated statement of professional values and ethics, which are put forth in its Code of Ethics. The 2021 updated Code of Ethics can be found in English and Spanish at [Code of Ethics: English](#) and [Code of Ethics: Spanish](#)

We are delighted with your interest in the social work major at St. Olaf, and welcome any inquiries about the program, the policies or any career path.

I. Social Work Program Heritage, Mission, Goals, and Competencies and Practice Behaviors

A. Heritage

Since its founding, St. Olaf College has recognized social work, teaching, and ministry as vocations in keeping with the mission of the College and has educated individuals to those ends. The St. Olaf Catalog for 1930 – 31 included the first listing of “Social Service Work” in a section titled “Courses Recommended in Preparation for Professional Study.” Agnes Larson, class of 1916, long-term history department chair and a beloved figure in St. Olaf history, did settlement work in Chicago after her graduation from St. Olaf. In 1965, specific educational background for social work practice was offered. The Catalog listed a recommended set of courses, including sociology, psychology, biology, mathematics, economics, philosophy, and political science. The 1965-66 College Catalog described “Sociology 61, Introduction to Social Work,” as a survey of professional social work; history of social welfare; methods-casework, group work and community organization, public welfare agencies; group field experience observing social agencies. The Council on Social Work Education has accredited the St. Olaf Social Work Program since 1990.

B. Mission

The social work program mission is to prepare liberally educated professional social workers to ethically serve diverse populations and to promote a lifelong commitment to a just global community. Our social workers will be guided by our professional social work values of service, social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competency.

The mission of the Program is consistent with the mission of the college, to “*challenge students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition..*” (College Catalog). Preparing graduates for social service is part of the heritage of St. Olaf College. The Articles of Incorporation affirm that the “*instruction and life of the college should aim to fit the student for active Christian service.*”

A statement of mission published on the occasion of the College’s Centennial (1974) states:
“*St. Olaf has always provided instruction related to the occupational needs and structures of society. Moreover, it has consistently affirmed in its statement of aims and objectives that liberal education and certain types of professional and pre-professional education are not mutually exclusive. The rationale for career-related programs acknowledges that in their search of service to society and on self-fulfillment through meaningful work, they are compatible with the ultimate aims of the college.*” (Identity and Mission in a Changing Context).

On the occasion of the College’s 125th anniversary, St. Olaf published *St. Olaf College 2000: Identity and Mission for the 21st Century*, which states: “*...students come to St. Olaf because they and their families believe in what the college stands for and what it has to offer—liberal arts education dedicated to the goals of personal enrichment and social service.*”

C. Goals

The Social Work Program has developed four goals that serve as the guidelines for its operation the 2022-23 catalog says “and relate directly to the mission of the college and the Program. Each goal is carefully chosen to reflect the combined mission of the College and the necessary preparation for generalist practice. The goals are:

1. *to prepare students for generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities of diverse backgrounds;*

Baccalaureate prepared social workers are generalist practitioners who have beginning level knowledge and skills to work with diverse clients to increase skills and protective factors, prevent and alleviate distress, and use/develop resources.

2. *to educate students to understand and appreciate a scientific approach to knowledge building and practice;*

Generalist practitioners have a responsibility to contribute to the development and testing of knowledge related to enhancement of human well-being and promotion of social justice. Students learn about the relationship of theory and practice, how to conduct beginning level research, and what is their responsibility to clients, and to the profession in the application of theory to practice.

3. *to enable students to reflect on and be responsible for, their own ethical conduct;*

Students are challenged to reflect on their own behavior and their responsibilities as professionals through their liberal arts and social work education. The values and ethics of social work are made explicit in the curriculum from the beginning courses through the senior seminar,

and students have numerous opportunities to reflect and act on the values of the profession in relation to their personal values, the values of their clients, and the values of society.

4. to strengthen students' commitments to lives of service and leadership in the global community.

Service is carried out when just social and economic policies are implemented and unjust policies are challenged and changed; this is the work of social workers. Leadership is seen in the pursuit of policies and programs that meet needs, prevent future needs, empower populations at risk, and promote justice. Students learn that these issues do not just face citizens of this country; social workers work with immigrants, refugees, and people in countries outside the United States. Social workers need to commit to life-long learning as the contexts for the profession evolve.

The mission and goals of the Social Work Program are consistent with the purposes, values, and ethics of social work. Consistent with the dual purpose of the profession, we prepare students to work directly with a variety of people to meet their own goals and to reach their aspirations. In addition, students learn beginning practice at the macro levels of policy, research, and administration, in order to advance policies and practices that meet basic human needs and promote justice. Students are taught to reflect on their practice as values-based, with specific attention to the diversity and strengths of clients.

D. Core Social Work Competencies and Practice Behaviors (CSWE EPAS 2015)

The Social Work Program has nine stated competencies that flow from its mission and goals. By the time of commencement, students must demonstrate achievement of these 9 competencies with the 31 practice behaviors in our program. These competencies are from the 2015 CSWE Education Policy and Accreditation Standards Statement and are fundamental to all baccalaureate social work education programs. The expected competencies and practice behaviors follow:

St. Olaf Social Work Program Competencies with Practice Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

1.1 make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;

1.2 use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;

1.3 demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;

1.4 use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and

1.5 use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice

2.6 apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;

2.7 present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and

2.8 apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice

3.9 apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and

3.10 engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 4: Engage In Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice

4.11 use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;

4.12 apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and

4.13 use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

5.14 identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;

5.15 assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;

5.16 apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic and environmental justice.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

6.17 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and

6.18 use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

7.19 collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;

7.20 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;

7.21 develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and

7.22 select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

8.23 critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;

8.24 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;

8.25 use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;

8.26 negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and

8.27 facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

9.28 select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;

9.29 apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;

9.30 critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and

9.31 apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

II. Requirements of the Major

The St. Olaf College Catalog contains the official description of the major and Program. The major includes:

A. Required Prerequisite Courses

Sociology 121: Introduction to Sociology (Or other sociology course approved by the BSW Program Director)	1 course
Psychology 125: Principles of Psychology	1 course
Psychology 241: Developmental Psychology	1 course
Biology 123: Human Biology or Biology 243: Human Anatomy and Physiology (Or other biology course approved by Chair)	1 course

B. Required Social Work Foundation Courses

Social Work 221: Social Work and Social Welfare	1 course
Social Work 246: Human Behavior in the Social Environment	1 course
Social Work 254: Inclusive Practice: Individuals and Families	1 course
Social Work 258: Social Policy	1 course
Social Work 261: Inclusive Practice: Groups, Organizations and Communities	1 course
Social Work 274: Research Methods in Social Work	1 course
Social Work 373: Just Practice	1 course
Social Work 380: Field Practicum/Integrative Seminar	3 courses
Social Work 381: Social Worker as Professional	1 course

III. Social Work Electives

In addition to the required courses for the social work major, the program occasionally offers elective courses, which contribute knowledge about social work and social welfare to the College's curriculum. They may be taken by social work majors but are not part of the required curriculum. Occasional elective Social Work courses include:

Social Work 120: I Want to Help People
Social Work 122: Global Challenges
Social Work 280: Social Realities of South Africa

IV. Advising

A. Advisor Selection

Students interested in social work are urged to seek advice on their plan of study during their first year at St. Olaf or as soon as possible. Students who select the social work major need to choose a social work faculty member as an advisor. They should formally initiate a change of advisor with the Registrar's office by completing an Advisor Change Form online and having it approved by the new advisor. Social Work faculty split advising responsibilities equally.

B. Role of the Social Work Advisor

The social work faculty advisor fulfills many roles in relationship with the student who has chosen a social work major.

The Social Work faculty advisor *assesses aptitude and motivation for a social work career*—Advisors ask informal questions when they first meet with students, e.g. How did your interest in human services develop? What experience have you had working with people? What response do your family members have to your interest in social work? They also refer students to our St. Olaf Social Work [website](#).

The Social Work faculty advisor *guides the student's selection of course work* – Faculty provide each student with the [Planning Guide](#) for Social Work Major to follow as they plan their course work. They review it together in the faculty-student meeting required prior to each semester's registration. At that time the faculty advisor is also able to suggest general education courses that are closely related to social work. The advisor also helps the student consider the practicalities of a particular semester schedule, taking into account a need for variety in assignments (not four heavy reading classes), balanced workload (e.g. not only Tuesday/Thursday classes), etc.

The Social Work faculty advisor *monitors the advisee's academic performance and well-being and evaluates student performance with other faculty and the Field Coordinator where appropriate*. Advisees are required to meet with the advisor before registration every semester where the advisor notes online that the student is prepared for registration.

This provides an opportunity for the advisor to counsel and/or refer the student who is having academic difficulties. Each semester, the advisor reviews the student's degree path, which may signal problems in classes and provide a starting point for discussion about remediation with the student. Once students declare interest in the social work major, and become involved in the sequence of major courses, faculty get to know them well. Feedback, both formal (grades, written comments, Field Practicum Evaluation) and informal (one on one meetings) on a student's performance is available regularly.

The Social Work faculty advisor *augments counseling provided by the Field Coordinator and other faculty about choice of field setting, graduate school, service programs, and future employment* helping students assess which of the options available will best meet their needs and goals. Faculty discuss student interests in specific client populations

informally during the first two years. Students also have ample opportunities to try out some directions, whether through course requirements (SW221 shadow experience and SW254 Story Partners) or in a volunteer capacity (e.g. Project Friendship). In the spring of the junior year, the formal process of placement in field practice occurs (see description of this process in the [Field Practicum Manual](#)). Data gathered in the process of academic advising is often useful to the Field Coordinator, who works to facilitate good matches.

C. Professional Advising

Professional and career advising are available from the Program faculty. The Program sponsors an annual Career Night featuring a panel of locally employed graduates of the Program during field practicum seminar. The Social Work faculty takes the responsibility of advising students very seriously.

The Piper Center for Vocation and Careers provides supplemental career counseling, job search assistance, and many career resources. They maintain the Alumni Advising Network, graduates of St. Olaf who are willing to talk with students about careers and employment. Social Work Program graduates participate in the network. The Program faculty also maintain contact with graduates who will provide assistance at any time in their careers; a particular resource is the St. Olaf Social Work Alumni private Facebook group.

One of the benefits of an education at St. Olaf is the low student to faculty ratio, which enables students to have faculty mentors and supporters who know them personally. This is especially true in the Social Work Program.

V. Admission to the Program

When students are ready to declare their interest in social work, they complete a declaration of major form online with the registrar's office; this declaration is then approved if the student indicates having held a conversation about the major with a faculty member. This does not oblige the student to continue in the major or ensure admission to the program.

To be admitted as a major in the Social Work Program, a student must:

- be admitted to the college in good standing;
- maintain a satisfactory academic record and not be on academic probation;
- earn a passing grade (D- or better) in Psychology 125 and a "C-" or better in Sociology 121, Psychology 241, Biology 123 or 243, and Social Work 221;
- meet with a Social Work faculty member to discuss suitability for, interest in, and requirements for, the major; and
- complete the Social Work Program Application by November 1 of the junior year.

Prior to the fall of the junior year, most commonly during the sophomore year, students meet individually with one of the faculty members to discuss admission to the Program. During this discussion, the faculty person discerns the reasons for the student's interest in social work, elicits discussion of the student's academic and career goals, reviews the student's completed courses

and grades, ensures that the student has read the Program Manual and explains the requirements of the major. In this discussion with a faculty member, it may become clear that a student is expressing interest in other human services, e.g. the ministry or teaching, or the student has an inaccurate perception of social work. In these cases, this conversation serves as an important gate-keeping tool for the major, encouraging such students to pursue areas of study more suited to their interests and goals. If it is evident that the student is serious about the major and fulfills the criteria listed above, the student is encouraged to formally declare the major on the Student Information System. The Program does not discriminate against any student for the major on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.

Students apply for formal admission to the Social Work Program before November 1 of their third or junior year, after completing SW221: Social Work and Social Welfare. Program applications are available on the Department website and are to be returned to the Department BSW Program Director. When the Program Application form is completed it is reviewed by the Program Director, who ensures that all the above requirements for admission are met. The student is then notified in a letter by the Program Director of his/her/their acceptance into the major prior to the beginning of the second semester of the junior year. A provisional acceptance letter may be granted for particular reasons – these are specific individual letters to the students with expectations for corrections necessary for admission. These expectations are set out in a meeting with the Program Director. If the student is not accepted, the Program Director meets in person with the student to convey the decision.

VI. Transfer to the Program

Credit for course work taken at other colleges is evaluated according to college policy, by the Registrar and the Program Director. Students who transfer to St. Olaf at or before the beginning of the junior (third) year may be considered for admission to the Social Work Program if the courses taken prior to St. Olaf are from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. No credit is given for field practicum taken at any college other than St. Olaf. Neither the College nor the Program gives credit or waivers for life experience or previous work experience. Formal notification is provided to the student by the Registrar.

VII. Student Responsibilities

“Students are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled”

[Student Rights and Academic Freedom – The Book](#)

Student responsibilities for class attendance, completion of assignments, and for general academic work are delineated in each course syllabus. Specific responsibilities for the Field Practicum are included in the Field Practicum Manual given to both students and Field Supervisors. Faculty work closely with the [Disability and Access – Center for Advising and Academic Support](#) and to enable the success of students who have documented disabilities requiring accommodations.

Students in the Social Work Program are expected and enabled to be actively involved in the Program's activities and to work on their own behalf. They have formal and informal roles in the work of the College, and the Social Work Program. The College and the Program provide policies and procedures for redress of grievance, which are augmented by the Program's structure for informal mediation of conflict and formal procedures for petition for continuations and for appeal of termination.

VIII. Student Rights/ Grievance Procedures

“St. Olaf College believes that the professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression. It believes further that student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis...”

[Student Rights and Academic Freedom – The Book](#)

Detailed statements of the students' rights, responsibilities and role in governance of the college are published in the [Student Handbook](#). Those formal procedures and the line of administrative authority to which the student may appeal provide a framework for dealing with serious matters and those that are not amenable to resolution within the Program.

Students may expect free discussion, inquiry and expression in the classroom and evaluations based solely on academic standards. The Program adheres to its Policy on Non-discrimination and Diversity and expects student performance to conform with the NASW Code of Ethics. Records and personal information are confidential and available to the student in accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).

When students have grievances with the Social Work Program, all parties are expected to make an attempt to resolve the conflict or disagreement directly with one another by face-to-face meeting or in writing. The Field Coordinator mediates difficulties between students and Field Supervisors in the host agencies. If a three-way, face-to-face meeting does not yield a satisfactory solution, the Program Director is asked to mediate. If these efforts do not resolve the difficulty, the student is urged to use the Program and college procedures.

IX. Student Participation in Governance

There is an elected student representative on all major standing faculty committees (e.g. curriculum committee, Student Life Committee) at St. Olaf College. The student government establishes the procedures for election of the student representatives to the college committees. Students may make suggestions or take concerns to the appropriate faculty committee through its chair or through a Student Senate representative or directly to the President. ([The Book, 2022-23](#))

Students participate formally and informally in governance of the Social Work Program. A junior social work student attends the bi-weekly meeting of Department faculty and staff; this volunteer position lasts for one semester. This student serves with a junior family studies concentrator; together they have significant input into the Department plans and changes. They make themselves available to students who have ideas, questions or criticisms for the

Department to consider. Student ideas, opinions, and feedback are welcome any time by the Program faculty and staff.

X. Student Organization

College policy states that students are free to organize and join associations to promote their common interests. Students majoring in social work are encouraged to organize and sponsor special events for other students in the Program and for the general campus population. Social Workers and the Greater Good (SWAGG), led by social work students, is eligible to apply for small group funding from the Student Activities Committee (SAC) to support their activities.

XI. Ethical Behavior

Students are introduced to the NASW Code of Ethics and the ethical statements outlined in Minnesota Statute governing the Minnesota Board of Social Work and to the expectations that they are guides for professional decisions and behavior. St. Olaf policies on [academic integrity](#) include the Honor Code, which has been in effect at St. Olaf since 1911; students accept the responsibility for proper and honest conduct during examinations. The Honor Council hears all complaints of violations, conducts investigations, makes judgment, and imposes penalties. The Honor System and policies on integrity apply to all aspects of the Social Work Program, including fulfillment of required practicum hours.

Violation of the NASW Code of Ethics or the college policies on academic integrity may be grounds for termination from the Program.

XII. Professional Licensure Disclosure

The social work program is designed to meet educational requirements for professional licensure/certification. Education is one of many requirements needed for licensure/certification. Additional requirements may include (but are not limited to): post-graduation examinations or experience, application and licensing fees, criminal background checks, reference checks, and/or fingerprint submissions. It is a student's responsibility to regularly check with the state/territory where you intend to seek licensure to confirm all licensing/certification requirements. Licensure/certification requirements can vary by state/territory, as each state/territory sets their own standards (see program [webpage](#) for specific state/territory lists).

In the junior and senior years, students will have the following opportunities to discuss with the faculty where they hope/intend to practice social work; each conversation will start with a discussion in the classroom of licensure differences across states and territories:

- In SW221 each semester
- In SW246/254 in the fall
- In SW261 in the spring
- In SW373/380 in the fall
- In SW381 in the spring

XIII. Policies

A. TRANSFER TO THE MAJOR

POLICY: The St. Olaf Social Work Program welcomes transfer students to the social work major.

PROCEDURE:

1. Student must first go through the college admissions procedures;
 2. Student must be at, or prior to, the beginning of the third (junior) year;
 3. Any social work courses for transfer must have been taken at a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education;
 4. Student may have taken four of the following six prerequisite or foundation courses for credit toward the major if the grade earned was “C-” or better;
 - Introductory Sociology*
 - Introductory Psychology*
 - Developmental Psychology (lifespan)*/**
 - Human Biology**
 - Social Work and Social Welfare*/**** (Course for general education credit at St. Olaf)
 5. Student may request, in writing, an additional one or two courses be accepted for transfer (e.g. Human Behavior in the Social Environment or Social Policy). Such a request will be reviewed individually by the Program Director and will include a careful review of catalog description, syllabi, and assignments completed at another CSWE accredited program;
 6. Under no circumstances may a student transfer course work in social work practice or field practicum.
- * must be taken prior to or concurrent with beginning the major
** syllabi and assignments must be approved by the Social Work Program Director.

B. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS CURRICULUM

POLICY: The Social Work Program actively supports the mission of St. Olaf College, which includes “challenging students to excel in the liberal arts...” (College Catalog). The general education requirements of the College provide a strong base of liberal arts learning for students in the Social Work Program. Faculty advising provides guidance to students as they integrate liberal arts courses with Social Work major requirements.

PROCEDURE: Students are reminded to refer frequently to the Planning Guide for Social Work Major and to avail themselves of assistance offered by a Social Work Program faculty advisor prior to each semester’s registration.

C. DEFINITION OF GENERALIST PRACTICE

POLICY: The St. Olaf Social Work Program prepares students for beginning level, ethical, professional generalist social work practice. Generalist practice is multilevel intervention with clients (individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities) of diverse backgrounds. It uses the social systems framework, planned change process, empowerment perspective and strengths-based approach to practice. It is grounded in the liberal arts, scientifically informed and ethical.

PROCEDURE: N/A

D. POLICY ON BIOLOGY CONTENT REQUIREMENT FOR THE MAJOR

POLICY: The Social Work Program adheres to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (2015). The standards state, “*social workers apply theories and knowledge from the liberal arts to understand biological, social, cultural, psychological, and spiritual development*”. The Program faculty agree that content on human biological systems is crucial to an understanding of human beings, their strengths and needs. The Program faculty want to respect different routes to this information in order to remove unnecessary barriers for students who desire acceptance into the Program.

PROCEDURE:

The following are possible ways to meet the required biology content for the social work major:

1. Biology 123: Human Biology
2. Biology 243: Human Anatomy and Physiology
3. Another St. Olaf Biology course that includes the following content:
 - a. Introduction to human biological systems (neurological, skeletal, digestive, reproductive, muscular, respiratory, circulatory, etc.)
 - b. The process and steps of the scientific method
 - c. Exposure to the relationship between human biological systems and particular human social issues (e.g. infectious diseases, nutrition, poverty, eating disorders, reproductive technologies, bioethics, etc.).

If in doubt about the extent to which such content is included, student must discuss with the Biology faculty member who teaches the course and also request pre-approval from the Social Work Program Director.

4. Students may complete a human biology course at another institution of higher education and count it for the Biology credit for the Social Work major. Such a course must meet the criteria listed in #3 above. The course does not need to be approved as St. Olaf credit, but students must provide evidence of grade of “C-“ or better to the Program Director. The Program Director must examine the course description (and syllabus, if needed) before approval can be granted; it is better to request such approval prior to enrolling in the course. Proof of grade is the responsibility of the student.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

1. The biology course is considered a prerequisite to the social work major and must be taken prior to, or during, the fall semester, junior year.
2. Social work majors should achieve a grade of C- or higher in the biology course in order to be admitted to the major.
3. Graduate programs in social work generally include a biology requirement for entering students. These requirements vary from “college level biology” to specifically “a course in human biology”. Since St. Olaf graduates enter graduate programs all over the country and abroad, we cannot guarantee that the course taken at St. Olaf will meet a graduate school’s requirements. Students who consider graduate work in social work should keep their biology syllabus for reference, if needed.

E. NON-DISCRIMINATION AND DIVERSITY

POLICY: The Social Work Program supports the purposes and goals of affirmative action and equal opportunity, as does the College. We make no distinction among students on the basis of age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation. The College and the Program are committed to creating and maintaining an environment for work and study in which all are treated with respect and dignity. Our College and Program hold a core value of being an anti-racist and anti-oppressive community. Human diversity in social work and in society is to be cherished and celebrated. The Program takes affirmative action to maintain freedom from discrimination and maximize opportunity for all to pursue a major in social work.

PROCEDURE: N/A

F. INFORMED CONSENT

POLICY: The Social Work Program has the responsibility to promote professional growth and development of students, and ensure that graduating students are competent to begin practice and meet professional and ethical standards. To these ends, it is necessary to share relevant information* about the students and their progress with those who are part of the team which supports and directs the student in field practicum. Relevant information will be shared with involved parties—student, Field Coordinator, Social Work faculty, and Field Supervisor as appropriate. This information will be shared to protect clients as well as students and to facilitate the placement, the learning process, and the evaluation process. Students, faculty and Field Supervisors will have knowledge of this policy before the placement process begins.

* Note: relevant information is defined as that which has a direct impact on field practicum. Information is relevant when it affects students’ work with clients, field supervisors, agency staff, or the learning process.

PROCEDURE:

1. The policy is located in the Program Manual and Field Practicum Manual. The Field Coordinator discusses it in field seminar and in field supervisor orientations.

2. The Field Coordinator will discuss with students any appropriate self-disclosure and possible outcomes of sharing.
3. If concerns arise about a student during the practicum placement process, the Field Coordinator will discuss concerns with students.
4. If concerns arise about a student while in placement, the Field Coordinator, Field Supervisor, and the student together will discuss the concerns including implications for the clients and for social work as a profession.
5. When a student, Field Coordinator, and Field Supervisor agree to terminate a placement before the scheduled ending time, the student and Field Coordinator will sign an agreement stating what information about the student will be shared with any future Field Supervisor or potential employer.
6. Students may use the grievance procedure outlined in the Program Manual when they believe the information has been misused or not shared appropriately.
7. Information shared and written agreements will be kept in the student's file on the shared drive.

Based on a model policy from the University of St. Thomas/College of St. Catherine with permission.

G. TRANSPORTATION

POLICY: Due to general concerns related to financial, emotional, institutional, and legal liability, the department prohibits transporting clients in student's private/personal vehicles.

PROCEDURE: There may be situations where all workers in the agency are expected to transport clients on rare occasions and, as a regular participant in the agency/program, a student might be put in a position where it would seem to be necessary. If that is the case, the following is required:

1. The student must try to find alternatives whenever possible and avoid being placed in this position (for example, Heartland Transit is available for public transit within Northfield);
2. The student must copy the face sheet of their personal auto insurance policy by September 25 and give it to the Field Coordinator; the Coordinator will send it to the College Risk Manager with a note explaining that the Program discourages private transport, but that in a rare instance it might be necessary; in that case, the student would be covered by their own insurance;
3. The student must require **all** passengers to wear seatbelts and have available appropriate child and infant restraints at **all** times; the vehicle will not move until these are in operation.
4. The student must report to the department (both to the Field Coordinator and the Program Director) **and** the College Risk Manager (x3018) **any** problems that they encounter—accidents, for example, no matter how minor—when a client/student is in the car, even if there seems to be no harm to the client(s) or to the student.

H. PRACTICUM AT PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT

POLICY: The practicum is the signature pedagogy of social work education, designed to enable students to demonstrate competent beginning level, ethical, generalist social work practice with diverse client systems of all sizes. It is important that the student has an opportunity in the practicum setting to gain the experience necessary to reach this beginning level of practice. The Social Work Program and the Council on Social Work Education require that the distinction between student and employee be clear and unambiguous.

PROCEDURE: Practicums at the place of employment will be allowed only under the following conditions:

1. The practicum must have social work as the primary function. Social work as a discipline must be clearly distinguishable from other disciplines practiced in the agency.
2. A student must have a qualitatively different experience from that provided by their regular employment at the agency.
3. The student must be supervised by a qualified, social work Field Supervisor who is not their immediate supervisor.
4. The practicum focus must be educational, unencumbered by workload and administrative responsibilities of regular employment in the agency.
5. The student's obligations to the college—attendance at seminars, completed papers and projects—must have the support of the agency. No excuses for absences or delays related to employment will be accepted by the social work Field Coordinator.
6. The student will submit to the Field Coordinator a letter detailing how the above criteria will be met. Both the student's employment supervisor and their Field Supervisor must sign the letter.

I. DISTANT FIELD PRACTICUMS

POLICY: The Social Work Program respectfully considers the needs and interests of individual students for the field practicum within the requirements of the major.

- 1) a minimum of 400 hours
- 2) placement in an agency that provides a generalist practice experience
- 3) access to an integrative seminar at least every other week, preferably weekly, total approximately 24 hours
- 4) appropriate supervision, as defined in the Field Practicum Manual

PROCEDURE: When students request a practicum site further than 100 miles from the St. Olaf campus, the student will follow the procedure outlined below:

The student must:

1. Initiate the process by submitting a written request (email is permissible) to the Program Director as early as possible, but no later than January 1 of the year including the fall semester block field practicum.
2. Locate possible practicum sites, with the assistance of a social work faculty member (request for assistance must come from the student) using the following criteria:

- The agency must provide opportunity for the student to practice generalist social work practice as defined by the St. Olaf Social Work Program and;
 - The agency and Field Supervisor must agree to the terms and responsibilities delineated in the St. Olaf Field Practicum Manual.
3. Then discuss options with the Field Coordinator, who must approve the practicum site.
 4. Consult with the Field Coordinator before leaving campus to agree upon dates to complete the Learning Plan and additional assignments
 5. Fulfill assignments as agreed upon with the St. Olaf Field Coordinator
 6. Initiate a minimum of six contacts with the Field Coordinator by telephone, Zoom, video chat or email during the semester to report on activities and learning in the practicum.
 7. Reimburse the Social Work Program for the actual costs associated with the in-person visit of the Field Coordinator to the site. This visit must allow a minimum of one full day on-site. Costs to be reimbursed will include, but not be limited to:
 - Transportation by air or rail
 - Hotel accommodations for the number of nights necessary to the visit
 - Local transportation by taxi, light rail, bus, etc. to get to and from the site
 - Standard mileage for round trip to the Mpls/St. Paul airport and parking expenses, if necessary
 - Meals during the time of the visit, including travel days that are not paid for by the agency or the student on site.
 8. Locate a courtesy liaison faculty member at a host institution that will agree to monitor the practicum and provide an integrative seminar in which the student will process the field experience with the host institution students in field practicums. This arrangement must be approved by the field coordinator.

The host institution must:

1. Have an accredited BSW program
2. Be willing to host the student for the semester without charge to the student
3. Be on a semester calendar – not quarters
4. Have a block placement model for the field experience
5. Provide an integrative seminar for the fall semester in which the student could participate

Responsibilities of all parties

The St. Olaf College Field Coordinator must:

1. Approve the practicum site selected in cooperation with the student.
2. Have telephone contact with both the host school liaison and the Field Supervisor at least once before the onset of the practicum.
3. Prepare letters of agreement that are acceptable to all parties and that meet legal guidelines for such informal exchanges
4. Be in regular contact by telephone, Zoom, Skype or substantive emails with the student during the semester
5. Make one in-person visit to the site to monitor the experience (student is responsible for the costs of this visit)

6. Invite the host liaison faculty member to provide written feedback about the student's experience in letter or email
7. Retain responsibility for the final grade of the student
8. Agree on responsibilities for each party in a written document submitted to St. Olaf College Administration.

The host school liaison faculty member must:

1. Teach in a CSWE accredited BSW program
2. Agree to work with the student to accomplish the St. Olaf Social Work Program competencies and practice behaviors for the practicum
3. Assign and evaluate required reading and writing that supports the fieldwork experience at the host institution and, if necessary, at St. Olaf
4. Agree to communicate by telephone, email, Zoom, Skype, or in person with the on-site Field Supervisor when that is appropriate.

The on-site Field Supervisor must:

1. Be on the approved practicum site list of at least one local BSW or MSW program and possess the MSW degree.
2. Be willing to provide weekly supervision to the student, either individually or in a group of similar social work students.
3. Agree to communicate with the St. Olaf Field Coordinator by email, Zoom, Skype, or telephone at least twice during the semester and more frequently if issues, concerns or problems develop.
4. Agree to host one in-person visit of the Field Coordinator to the agency at a mutually agreed upon time during the semester.
5. Agree to complete the St. Olaf Field Practicum Evaluation Forms and the Field Supervisor Feedback form at the end of the practicum.

J. TERMINATION

POLICY: An accredited social work program that prepares students for beginning level ethical professional practice certifies that graduates have satisfactorily demonstrated the practice behaviors of the program. Social Work Program faculty work with each student interested in, and accepted into, the social work major to ensure the student's academic success in preparation for beginning professional generalist practice. Social work education requires continuous evaluation of the student and their readiness for competent, ethical professional practice. This readiness includes demonstration of acceptable standards of professional conduct, integrity, and stability requisite for professional practice.

PROCEDURE:

1. In order to remain in the program and be certified to graduate with a social work major, a student must:
 - a. not be on academic probation in the college;
 - b. pass, with a grade of "C" or better in all social work courses required for the major;

- c. complete the required hours for field practicum in a satisfactory and ethical manner as demonstrated on the Field Practicum Evaluation form;
 - d. demonstrate understanding of the NASW Code of Ethics, the College policies on non-discrimination and sexual harassment, and the Social Work Program Policy on Non-discrimination and demonstrate a consistent and growing commitment to competent and ethical practice in accordance with each of them;
2. Social Work faculty may terminate a student from the program if any one of the following occurs:
 - a. The student is placed by college officials on academic probation or suspension;
 - b. The student achieves below a "C" in a social work course required for the major;
 - c. The student FAILS field practicum:
 - because they did not complete the required number of hours OR
 - because their performance was unsatisfactory (see d. below);
 - d. The student violated the St. Olaf Policies on Academic Integrity, a provision of the NASW Code of Ethics, the college policies on non-discrimination, or sexual harassment, or the Program's Policy on Non-discrimination and failed to recognize the violation and its potential for harm to clients in discussion with the Program Director or Field Coordinator;
 - e. The student's G.P.A. is below 2.0 for two or more semesters**.
3. The Program Director will notify the student of the reason for termination, in person and in writing. The notification will include a description of the process to petition for continuation in the program with applicable deadlines.
4. If a student is faced with termination, they may petition to continue in the program. In this petition for continuation the student must:
 - a. Explain in writing the reasons for the difficulty;
 - b. Describe plans for change in order to satisfactorily complete the Program. This written petition must be returned to the Program Director at least 10 days prior to registration for the next semester or the January interim to allow time for the chair to make a decision about continuation in the program. If the chair decides to accept the petition for continuance, the chair will inform the student of this decision in writing, with deadlines for the completion of the plans for change. The student may remain in the program provided plans for meeting criteria are successfully implemented.
5. If a student is notified of final termination from the program, the student may appeal following program and college procedure for grievances published in the Social Work Program Manual (see K. Grievance) and the [Student Academic Policies – Faculty Handbook](#)
6. If a student is terminated from the program, faculty will discuss the issue of future references with the student.

*In the Social Work Program it is difficult for students to repeat a course in which they fail to achieve a passing grade and to maintain the sequencing and integration of the program without significantly adding to the length of their undergraduate education. The professors counsel as soon as possible with any student in a social work class who is doing failing work and offers every opportunity for difficulties to be resolved early enough for the student to earn a grade of "C" or better. Students are also urged to seek help early if they are having trouble fulfilling the requirements of a course.

**If the GPA falls below 2.0 in a single semester, the student must meet with the social work advisor. Together they will assess the impact of that semester's work on the total program and discuss remedies. The advisor will send a summary of the conference to the student and to the Program Director, who will place it in the student's file. The student may respond to the conference by sending their own summary.

K. GRIEVANCE

POLICY: Students have the right to file a grievance when a conflict in the Program remains unresolved despite attempts to address it.

PROCEDURE:

1. All parties are expected to make an attempt to resolve the conflict or disagreement directly with one another by face-to-face meeting or in writing.
2. The Field Coordinator mediates difficulties between students and field supervisor in the host agencies.
3. If written attempts and face-to-face meetings do not yield a satisfactory solution, the Department Chair is asked to mediate. If the complaint is with the department chair, the Associate Dean of Social Science is asked to mediate. If these efforts do not resolve the difficulty, the student is urged to file a formal written complaint with the Provost and Dean of the College (for an academic issue) or the Dean of Students (for a non-academic issue). This Provost or Dean will notify a Hearing Committee of the complaint and will follow the college grievance procedures

XIV. CODES OF ETHICS

L. [NASW Code of Ethics](#)

M. Minnesota Board of Social Work/Ethics in Minnesota Statute
[MN Revisor's Office](#)
[Ch. 148E MN Statutes](#)

N. Ethics Questions Required in [Application](#) for Minnesota Social Work Licensure
(from Minnesota Board of Social Work website):

Standards of practice questions for licensure applicants to answer:

If you answer “YES” to any question below, include a detailed explanation (attach additional sheets if necessary). If you are currently licensed by the Board, do not report information you have previously reported.

1. Have you ever pled guilty to, pled no contest to, or been convicted of a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor, or felony, or are criminal charges pending against you? Include traffic offenses where the charge involves the use of alcohol or drugs even if the final conviction or plea is not related to the use of alcohol or drugs. YES NO
2. Are you currently unable to practice social work with reasonable skill and safety due to a mental or physical illness, or use of alcohol, drugs, or chemicals? NOTE: If you are currently participating in the Health Professionals Services Program (“HPSP”) for this illness, you may answer “NO” to this question. YES NO
3. Have you ever violated a social work licensing board or authority’s laws or rules related to the practice of social work? YES NO
4. Have you ever been denied a license by a licensing board or authority, investigated or disciplined by a licensing board or authority, or relinquished a license due to a violation of the licensing board or authority’s laws or rules? NOTE: “Licensing” includes registration, credentialing, certification, or any other form of government regulation of individual practitioners. YES NO
5. In any paid or volunteer job, have you ever been terminated, resigned in lieu of termination, or been subjected to disciplinary action, due to conduct that may be grounds for disciplinary action under the Social Work Practice Act? YES NO
6. In any paid or volunteer job, have you ever been named as a defendant in a civil litigation, arbitration, or a malpractice action? YES NO
7. Have you ever been denied membership in a professional association, investigated or disciplined by a professional association, or relinquished membership in a professional association due to a violation of the professional association’s code of ethics? YES NO
8. Have you ever been investigated by or subjected to disciplinary action by a post-secondary educational institution due to alleged misconduct? YES NO

XV. CSWE Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards

The purpose of the social work profession is to promote human and community well-being. Guided by a person and environment construct, a global perspective, respect for human diversity, and knowledge based on scientific inquiry, social work’s purpose is actualized through its quest for social and economic justice, the prevention of conditions that limit human rights, the elimination of poverty, and the enhancement of the quality of life for all persons.

Social work educators serve the profession through their teaching, scholarship, and service. Social work education—at the baccalaureate, master’s, and doctoral levels—shapes the profession’s future through the education of competent professionals, the generation of knowledge, and the exercise of leadership within the professional community.

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) uses the [Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards \(EPAS\)](#) to accredit baccalaureate- and master’s-level social work programs. EPAS supports academic excellence by establishing thresholds for professional competence. It permits programs to use traditional and emerging models of curriculum design by balancing

requirements that promote comparability across programs with a level of flexibility that encourages programs to differentiate.