Performance Standards

Communication Skills
Social work students must communicate effectively and sensitively with other students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals. They must express their ideas and feelings clearly and demonstrate a willingness and ability to listen to others. They must have sufficient skills in spoken and written English to understand the content presented in the program, and to complete adequately all oral and written assignments. They must write clearly, use correct grammar and spelling, and apply appropriate writing style, including APA referencing, appropriate source citation, and documentation. In addition, social work students must be computer literate.

Interpersonal Skills
Social work students must demonstrate the interpersonal skills needed to relate effectively to other students, faculty, staff, clients, and other professionals. Students must exhibit compassion, integrity, and demonstration of respect for and consideration of others. Students must take appropriate responsibility for their own actions and consider the impact of these actions on others.

Knowledge Base and Skills for Social Work Practice
The professional knowledge necessary for social work students is grounded in empirically-based and relevant knowledge. This includes evidence-based knowledge and skills in relationship building, data gathering, assessment, intervention, and evaluation of practice. Students must exhibit critical thinking in both the classroom and the field. Students must demonstrate that they meet the necessary social work competencies in field settings.

Stress Management
Social work students need to recognize the importance of handling stress within the context of family life, work, social life, and rigorous academic requirements. Social work students are encouraged to implement strategies for appropriate self-care and life/school/work balance so that stress does not interfere with meeting GSS program requirements.

Professional Commitment
Social work students must exhibit commitment to the goals, values, and ethical standards of the social work profession. These encompass individuals’ dignity and worth of all persons and their right to the equity of society’s resources.

Self-Awareness
The development of self-awareness is an important component of becoming a professional social worker. Social work students must develop the ability to understand their values, beliefs, attitudes, emotions, that affect their thinking, behavior, and relationships. It is vital that students show awareness of self and be willing to examine and change behavior when it interferes with working with clients and/or other professionals.

Objectivity
Social work students must strive to remain objective as they are evaluating clients, their situations, and developing interventions. The use of appropriate professional tools and processes taught in the classroom and field instruction settings assist in identifying and amending individual and institutionalized bias that may arise during the course of professional judgment and decision-making.

Empathy
Social work students must endeavor to communicate empathy and support to all those with whom they come into contact in field settings as well as in the classroom.

Medical Issues
Social work students must use sound judgment when facing medical and/or emotional problems that compromise scholastic and professional performance. Seeking professional help for personal problems, medical problems, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties is critical in order to address the best interests of the student and those to whom the student has professional responsibility.

Ethical Obligations
Social work students must:

• Practice in accordance with professional codes of ethics for the social work profession
• Appreciate the value of diversity. Social work students must serve in an appropriate manner all persons in need of assistance, regardless of the person’s age, class, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation (or lack thereof), gender, ability, sexual orientation, and value system. Students must not impose their own personal, religious, sexual and/or cultural values on clients.
• Respect the rights of others at all times
• Maintain confidentiality in the classroom, field, and other professional settings
• Demonstrate honesty and integrity by being truthful about one’s own background, experiences, and qualifications; adhere at all times to University policies on plagiarism
• Establish clear and appropriate boundaries consistent with University and agency policies. There is never to be sexual harassment of others, making any verbal or physical threats; becoming involved in sexual relationships with clients or supervisors; abusing others in physical, emotional, verbal, or sexual ways; or participating in dual relationships where conflicts of interest may exist.

Professional Behavior
Social work students must exhibit behaviors that are in full compliance with program and institutional policies, professional ethical standards, and societal laws in the classroom, field settings, and the community. Students’ appearance, dress, and general demeanor must reflect a professional manner. Professional behavior requirements include:

• Possessing the knowledge base and practicing within the scope of professional social work competencies
• Respecting the rights of others at all times others
• Being punctual and dependable
• Prioritizing responsibilities
• Regularly attending classes and fieldwork
• Observing deadlines and completing assignments on time
• Keeping appointments or making appropriate arrangements
• Accepting supervision and constructive criticism in a positive manner
• Working effectively with others, regardless of level of authority
• Being able to advocate for themselves in an appropriate and responsible manner and using proper channels of communication for conflict resolution