

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK PROGRAM

Student Handbook

2025 -2026



RAMAPO COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY
MSW STUDENT HANDBOOK
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The Social Work Faculty Welcomes You!

The Student Handbook provides essential information for MSW students. Its principal purpose is to give you details about the program's policies and procedures, including the curriculum rationale. You are responsible for reading and using the contents of this Student Handbook.

Please communicate any questions or concerns you may encounter as you study and learn at Ramapo College. Our goal for you is to prepare for advanced generalist practice by challenging yourself to excellence. Remember to ask questions and communicate with your professors. We are here to help you be successful!

Note that the Social Work Program at Ramapo College has transitioned the term “field” to “practicum” when referring to the signature pedagogy of social work education.

The Master of Social Work program has been accredited by the Council on Social Work Education according to the Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of 2015. Information about accreditation is available at www.cswe.org

THE SOCIAL WORK STAFF and FACULTY 2025-2026

Kaetlynn Ayala, MSW, LSW	Program Coordinator
Cardacia Davis, MSW	Director of Practicum Education of Social Work
Desiree DuBose, MSW, LSW	Practicum Coordinator of Social Work
Cort Engelken, MSW, LCSW	Clinical Social Work Associate
Melinda Inzani, MSW, LCSW	Practicum Coordinator of Social Work
Eileen Klein, PhD, MSW, MS, LCSW	Associate Professor of Social Work
Colleen Martinez, PhD, LCSW	Assistant Professor of Social Work
John McTighe, PhD, MSW, MDiv, LCSW	Professor of Social Work
Kathleen Ray, PhD, MSW, LCSW	Director of MSW Program Associate Professor of Social Work
Dolly Sacristan, PhD, MSW, LCSW	Assistant Professor of Social Work
Stephanie Elias Sarabia, PhD, MSW, LCSW, LCADC	Professor of Social Work
Gardan Speights, PhD, MSW, LCSW	Assistant Professor of Social Work

Social Work at Ramapo College

Ramapo College of New Jersey is the state's premier public liberal arts college, with over 6,000 students. It offers 40 undergraduate majors, nine joint B.S. programs in the medical professions, eight graduate degree programs, programs leading to certification in Teacher Education, and two teaching post-master's certificates. The campus is located in a country setting on a 357-acre, architecturally barrier-free campus in northern New Jersey. The school is twenty-five miles from New York City and close to the center of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey metropolitan region. Ramapo's small community is nestled in the greater New York City area, providing an intimate experience where students, faculty, and community agencies collaborate to serve those in need while drawing on the surrounding innovative and progressive culture.

Toward the end of the 1960s, a decade of considerable upheaval in higher education throughout the country, the leaders who planned Ramapo College sought to establish a college that would contribute to various newly developing approaches in higher education. The college was conceived to extend many of the advantages of the small, private liberal arts college to public college students. The students were provided with opportunities to work with faculty in developing programs of study that would prepare them for an increasingly knowledge-oriented, rapidly changing, global workplace and society.

With the support of the originating Board of Trustees, the founders developed a highly flexible approach to undergraduate education that focused on interdisciplinary liberal arts schools, organized by themes with a commitment to tutorials, seminars, and small classes. There was close integration of the classroom, independent study, experiential learning, and a strong commitment to serving first-generation working-class and academically and economically disadvantaged young people. Historically, Ramapo students came primarily from non-elite, northern New Jersey backgrounds. While there have been many middle- and lower-middle-class suburban students, from the beginning, Ramapo has actively recruited and sustained students who have disabilities, as well as students who are veterans, returning adults, economically disadvantaged, and immigrants. Today, the student body reflects the diversity of the New York/New Jersey metropolitan region and includes hundreds of international students. The diversity of the student body, the proximity of the College to a vibrant mix of multi-ethnic communities, some of the world's major multinational organizations, and the talents of the faculty make Ramapo College well-suited for delivering an education promoting social justice and meeting the local, state, and global needs.

Since its founding in 1969, Ramapo College has been committed to educating students to be active citizens in an increasingly complex and interrelated world. The College's five schools house academic programs that are actively linked to the outside community through experiential learning and independent study projects. Faculty and students are expected to be engaged citizens. Social justice is implicit in this conceptualization. The environment characterized by diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, student engagement, and community involvement gave birth to social work at Ramapo College.

The mission of Ramapo College is to providing students with a strong foundation for a lifetime of achievement. The College is committed to academic excellence through interdisciplinary and experiential learning and international and intercultural understanding. Ramapo College emphasizes teaching and individual attention to all students. We promote diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, student engagement, and community involvement.

CSWE accredited the Bachelor of Social Work Program (BSW) in 1979, retroactive to 1977. The BSW program has remained uninterrupted in reaffirmation and currently experiences exponential growth. This thriving BSW program was the ideal launchpad for the Master of Social Work Program (MSW) in 2015. The MSW program was accredited retroactively in February 2018. The program received its reaffirmation in 2023. While incorporating the theory and knowledge required of competent practitioners at every level, the MSW program will continue to prioritize community engagement, intercultural understanding, and experiential learning, reflecting and supporting the mission of Ramapo College.

The Mission of the Master of Social Work Program

The mission of the Master of Social Work Program is to prepare competent, compassionate, and research-informed social work professionals who advocate for social and economic justice and human well-being while honoring diversity within the context of the social environment. The focus of practice will be an emphasis on caring human relationships and freedom from all forms of oppression while supporting strengths, empowerment, and enhancing the quality of life. As advanced generalist practitioners, students will become influential leaders through planning and problem-solving, multi-system and interdisciplinary collaboration, and excellence in service to individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations, all from a global perspective. Following the greater mission of Ramapo College, the MSW program emphasizes individual attention to students. It promotes diversity, inclusiveness, sustainability, student engagement, community involvement through interdisciplinary and experiential learning, and international and intercultural understanding.

The Goals of the Master of Social Work Program (MSW)

The four goals of the MSW program, derived from the program's mission, are as follows:

To prepare competent social work professionals for advanced generalist practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities while honoring diversity in an ever-changing environmental context;

To educate social workers effectively with the knowledge, values, and skills of the profession at the advanced practice level in collaboration with and commitment to the greater community using an interdisciplinary approach;

To advance social justice by preparing leaders to effectively advocate for the development of social policies and social service delivery systems that improve the well-being of the client's lives from a global perspective, embracing innovation; and

To prepare social workers to be lifelong learners who will advocate for the alleviation of social problems and the eradication of social injustice and promote social, economic, and

environmental justice with a research-informed approach.

MSW Curriculum Design

The MSW program accepts students prepared at the undergraduate level and ready for graduate education. The curriculum grows from a liberal arts base. It assumes students entering the program bring intellectual, social, psychological, ethical, and physical preparation from the undergraduate level, ready for graduate education and advanced professional development. Graduate students are expected to think critically and analytically about the world and have the capacity to synthesize information from multiple disciplines and areas of social work knowledge and skills. To succeed, they need knowledge about cultural, social, historical, and scientific aspects of life and to communicate effectively in academic and social contexts. Official transcripts presented by prospective students applying to the MSW program represent the completion of an accredited undergraduate baccalaureate degree. In addition, they demonstrate essential communication skills in their personal statement, designed to express their interest in becoming professional social workers. These essays help inform their ability to express themselves clearly in writing and indicate their critical thinking skills, which are expected of baccalaureate graduates.

Social work education relies on the foundation of the liberal arts to support social work values, including service, social justice, dignity and worth of persons, human relationships, integrity, and competence. Grounding the program in the liberal arts makes demands on the MSW program as well as on its students. The program recognizes the rich history of the social work profession in connection with social, political, and economic developments of the past by analyzing, celebrating, and disputing the actions of social work's roles concerning present conditions. In addition, the classroom experience is enriched, and students' professional development is deepened when courses intentionally draw from other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, anthropology, political science, the arts, spirituality and religion, biological sciences, and literature. Finally, while preparation in the liberal arts might assume that students bring basic social skills conducive to working with people from all circumstances of life, the program endeavors to guide students' professional development in engagement with others and cultural competence to capably confront ethical dilemmas in diverse settings as a path to progress maximizing each client's potential and achieving social justice.

All students in the MSW program follow a curriculum in accordance with the Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) that prepares them for advanced generalist practice in social work. To qualify for the degree at Ramapo College requires 60 credit hours of study, including 1000 hours. Two-hour in-person sessions are augmented weekly by 30-minute online assignments to support classroom learning and elicit student interaction and discovery. The curriculum is built on a professional foundation, numbered as 500-level courses and representative of the generalist approach to practice. Students must complete the foundation courses by demonstrating their classroom and practicum placement competence. Competence is measured according to the program's learning objectives and practice behaviors and is gained as students learn and integrate the knowledge, values, and skills necessary for social work practice. Assessment of competence in practice behaviors continues throughout the MSW program.

Professional Foundation

Social Work Theory and Practice I & II (TP) are at the core of the professional foundation. One six-credit course is offered each semester. Three (3) credits account for classroom learning, and four (4) credits account for practicum education, which is the signature pedagogy of the profession. Each is equally essential for training students in the profession and measuring competency. These courses include a required monthly two-hour practicum seminar.

Social Work Theory and Practice I (TP) trains students in the beginning skills of engagement, interviewing, assessing, setting goals, and evaluating intervention strategies with diverse client populations. Students learn to establish a relationship based on collaboration and mutuality. Students will demonstrate beginning knowledge of direct intervention with individuals, families, social agencies, organizations, and communities.

The Code of Ethics is introduced as the benchmark against which ethical practice is sustained throughout the curriculum. In the second semester, **TPII** teaches a beginning knowledge of short-term, crisis, and extended intervention practice models, including those originating from evidence-based practice studies, emphasizing self-evaluation. Understanding the effects of diversity on human development and social work practice is at the heart of both of these practice classes. Each semester, 250 hours of supervised practice occur in agency placements arranged through the resources of the Practicum Education Department. Each student remains in one placement during the foundation year and is expected to move to a competent level of performance as an advanced generalist social worker by the close of the foundation year, having completed 500 hours of practicum. The essential nature of the **TPI&II** sequence cannot be overstated. Both **TPI and II** focus on collecting data, history taking, and assessing the client's strengths and vulnerabilities using a biological, psychological, family, social, cultural, and community frame. The impact of diversity, including gender and its expression, sexual orientation, age, mental and physical disabilities, and spirituality, is crucial to the curriculum. Critical thinking, developing a professional social work identity, and self-reflection are ongoing. Students internalize the worth of the individual, their rights to self-determination and confidentiality, and the commitment to making social agencies more responsive to human needs and advancing social and economic justice.

Concurrent with the **TPI&II** sequence, students gather essential knowledge, values, and skills through six additional courses. A sequence of two courses across the program, **Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE) I** appears first in the fall, concurrently with TP I. In the first course offered in the first semester, the person-in-environment perspective and the interaction of ecological and other theories provide students with theoretical underpinnings for practice. Stressing the centrality of culture, race, gender, socioeconomic realities, ethnicity, and the person-in-environment perspective, **HBSE II**, offered in the spring semester, applies these theories of human development to the life cycle as students use critical thinking to understand what motivates human behavior.

During the foundation year, fall semester and concurrent with HBSE I and TP I, **Cultural Diversity/Oppression, Racism and Privilege** help students understand their relationships to diversity and systems of oppression and privilege. This develops an understanding of their self-concept and increases self-awareness.

Social Welfare Programs and Policies I explore the history and the socio-political development of the Social Work profession with particular attention to its origins in social justice advocacy.

The course also introduces students to the basic programs of the U.S. social welfare system, their development and current functioning, methods of social service delivery, social policy content, beginning policy analysis, policy actions of agencies, professional associations, and political bodies, and the influence that policy has on all practice modalities.

During the spring semester and concurrent with HBSE II and TP II, **Clinical Practice with Groups** introduces students to knowledge and skills relevant to how the groups function in social work for socialization, social support, psychological treatment, self-help, advocacy, and prevention. This course is required for students who do not bring to the program completion of undergraduate content in the group process. **Social Work Research I** introduces the principles and methods of research, emphasizing the ethical nature of research. Students will develop knowledge of quantitative and qualitative research methods, and learn to evaluate social work literature critically, understand evidence-based practices, and conduct original research. Each of the courses concurrent with TP I and II may utilize the student's connection to a practicum experience to reinforce learning.

Professional Concentration (2nd year)

Professional concentration courses are numbered 600-level courses and take students through the advanced generalist curriculum. The faculty has selected advanced generalist practice as its concentration model for advanced standing.

Advanced generalist practitioners are skilled in interpersonal and interactional interventions, whether the client system consists of individuals, families, groups, communities, or organizations. Administrative and leadership capabilities in supervision, administration, program development, grant writing, legislative advocacy, and practice/program evaluation are non-clinical in focus but have a measurable impact on clinical and non-clinical practice contexts. While attention to non-clinical content is necessary for completing the program in the reflection of competence, the MSW program teaches the clinical knowledge and skills essential for a wide range of social work practice after graduation. It offers nine credits of electives in clinical courses alongside non-clinical options to advance understanding and skills in specific practice modalities.

Social Work Theory and Practice III & IV are at the core of the professional concentration and build upon the content of the professional foundation year. Each semester, 250 hours of supervised practice occur in agency placements arranged through the resources of the Practicum Education Department. Each student remains in one placement during the advanced generalist year and is expected to move to a competent level of performance, having completed 500 hours of practicum. Offered in the fall of the program's second year, **Social Work Theory and Practice III** builds on the content provided in the professional foundation year and is based on social work values, ethics, practice models, and person-in-environment perspectives. The course aims to help students deepen and extend their assessment and intervention skills in working with individuals and families who face challenges with a range of problems commonly found, including poverty, mental illness, substance abuse, trauma, physical illness, and disability. Major theories of practice with individuals and families deepen the student's knowledge base and skill set. Content related to diversity and oppression is integrated with understanding the concepts of privilege and power. The course prepares students to apply theories and evidence-based practices to clients in their practicum experience.

In the final semester of the professional concentration, **Social Work Theory and Practice IV** incorporates all previous Theory and Practice classes with a social justice perspective. Students are instructed in applying advanced ethical reasoning skills, making ethical decisions, and attending to professional roles and boundaries. Students will demonstrate the ability to use their skills for the good of client systems, securing needed services for clients and acting as change agents with groups, communities, and organizations. Consolidating a social work identity, which includes personal reflection and self-evaluation to ensure ongoing professional growth, is cultivated.

Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work is part of the Advanced Generalist Practice year. Students will research and review current evidence-based treatment interventions and develop skills in understanding the epidemiology, diagnosis, and treatment interventions specific to the major mental disorders. By the end of the semester, students will demonstrate an understanding of the diagnosis of mental disorders through the application of the DSM-5-TR.

In **Advanced Social Policy**, students discover that by building on policy learning in the foundation year, they may link policy to practice and research skills while examining the implications of diversity, inequality, and social and economic justice on social change. In this increasingly complex process, students engage the challenges of influencing change in the interest of consumers of services, agencies, and society. The course **Social Work Research II: Practice Evaluation** helps students understand research as a tool for practice, including single system design and program evaluation while considering the wide range of diverse interests, needs, and social justice implications. Focus is on the nature of a “program,” its history and context, types and purposes of practice and program evaluation designs, implementation of evaluation, and measurement and data collection options given the interests of various stakeholders. These research skills and outcomes from their application directly impact the understanding of agencies and organizations and their viability for contributing to meaningful social change.

Practicum Education in the MSW Program

As the signature pedagogy of social work education, practicum education in the MSW program requires 500 hours in the foundation year and 500 hours in the concentration year. Practicum is connected to the four Social Work Theory and Practice courses, two in the foundation year and two in the concentration year. These six-credit courses integrate course content with practicum experiences and learning. The Practicum Education Director maintains the relationship between the Practicum Instructor, the student, and the academic instructor. This integration of class and practicum fosters an open context for concrete skills development and problem-solving related to practice in social work. The policies and procedures of the MSW Practicum Education Program are found in the MSW Practicum Education Manual.

COURSE CURRICULUM MAP TO COMPLETE IN TWO YEARS

Courses are hybrid in delivery: weekly two hours in class, 30 minutes online

PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION

Fall Semester – Year 1 Full Time

MSWK 501 – Social Work Theory & Practice I	6 credits
MSWK 503 - Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3 credits
MSWK 505 – Social Welfare Programs and Policies I	3 credits
MSWK 507 – Cultural Diversity/Oppression, Racism, Privilege	3 credits

Spring Semester – Year 1 Full Time

MSWK 502 – Social Work Theory & Practice II	6 credits
MSWK 504 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3 credits
MSWK 506 – Social Work Research I	3 credits
MSWK 508 - Clinical Practice with Groups	3 credits
TOTAL - 32 credits	

Fall Semester – Year-Two Full Time

MSWK 601 – Social Work Theory & Practice III	6 credits
MSWK 603 – Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work	3 credits
MSWK 605 - Social Work Research II: Practice Evaluation	3 credits
MSWK 607 - Elective	3 credits

Spring Semester – Year-Two Full Time

MSWK 602 – Social Work Theory & Practice IV	6 credits
MSWK 604 – Advanced Social Policy	3 credits
MSWK 608 – Elective	3 credits
MSWK 609 – Elective	3 credits
TOTAL - 60 credits	

ADVANCED STANDING

Fall Semester – Year-Two Full Time

MSWK 601 – Social Work Theory & Practice III	6 credits
MSWK 603 – Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work	3 credits
MSWK 605 - Social Work Research II: Practice Evaluation	3 credits
MSWK 508 – Groups or MSWK 607*	3 credits

Spring Semester – Year-Two Full Time

MSWK 602 – Social Work Theory & Practice IV	6 credits
MSWK 604 – Advanced Social Policy	3 credits
MSWK 608 – Elective	3 credits
MSWK 609 – Elective	3 credits
TOTAL - 30 credits	

** If advanced standing students took groups at their BSW program, they can take an additional elective instead of MSWK 508.*

CURRICULUM MAP TO COMPLETE MSW IN THREE YEARS EXTENDED-TIME

PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATION – GENERALIST PRACTICE

FALL – YEAR-ONE – PT 6 credits

MSWK 505 – Social Welfare Programs and Policies I	3 credits
MSWK 507 – Cultural Diversity/Oppression, Racism, Privilege	3 credits

SPRING – YEAR-ONE – PT 6 credits

MSWK 504 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment II	3 credits
MSWK 506 – Social Work Research I	3 credits

FALL – YEAR-TWO – PT 9 credits

MSWK 501 – Social Work Theory & Practice I	6 credits
MSWK 503 – Human Behavior and the Social Environment I	3 credits

SPRING – YEAR-TWO – PT 9 credits

MSWK 502 – Social Work Theory & Practice II	6 credits
MSWK 508 – Clinical Practice with Groups	3 credits

FALL – YEAR-THREE – PT 12 credits

MSWK 601 – Social Work Theory & Practice III	6 credits
MSWK 603 – Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work	3 credits
MSWK 605 – Social Work Research II: Practice Evaluation	3 credits
MSWK 607 – Elective (TBA)	3 credits

SPRING – YEAR-THREE – PT 12 credits

MSWK 602 – Social Work Theory & Practice IV	6 credits
MSWK 604-Advanced Social Policy	3 credits
MSWK 608 – Elective (TBA)	3 credits
MSWK 609 – Elective (TBA)	3 credits

TOTAL - 60 credits

MSW Competencies and Practice Behaviors

The Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS 2022) of CSWE measure learning outcomes according to competencies defined by practice behaviors appearing at foundation and concentration levels of learning. The MSW program at Ramapo College has adopted CSWE's competencies, practice behaviors, and advanced generalist practice behaviors.

Competency	Practice Behaviors	Advanced Practice Behaviors
Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior	Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics within the profession as appropriate to the context.	Demonstrate leadership in applying ethical reasoning across complex or interdisciplinary settings, drawing from professional codes, relevant laws, and decision-making models.
	Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication	Independently integrate critical self-reflection and self-regulation into practice by identifying personal values, managing boundaries, and adapting professional behavior to diverse contexts.
	Use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes	Critically evaluate and apply ethical use of digital platforms, data systems, and emerging technologies to support effective and accountable practice.
	Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior	
Competency 2: Advance Human Rights and Social, Racial, Economic, and Environmental Justice	Advocate for human rights at the individual, family, group, organizational, and community system levels	Critically analyze systems of injustice and advocate for change in ways that are ethical, respectful, and appropriate to the professional context.
	Engage in practices that advance human rights to promote social, racial, economic, and environmental justice	Integrate human rights frameworks into all levels of practice, using an intersectional lens to address multiple forms of oppression.

Competency 3: Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice	Demonstrate anti-racist and anti-oppressive social work practice at the individual, family, group, organizational, community, research, and policy levels	Consistently apply anti-racist and anti-oppressive frameworks by critically assessing practice settings and addressing systemic inequities.
	Demonstrate cultural humility by applying critical reflection, self-awareness, and self-regulation to manage the influence of bias, power, privilege, and values in working with clients and constituencies, acknowledging them as experts of their own lived experiences	Use intersectional analysis and cultural humility to adjust approaches to client engagement, program delivery, and interprofessional collaboration.
		Actively elevate client and community voice in decision-making by deferring to lived experience as a central source of expertise.
Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice	Apply research findings to inform and improve practice, policy, and programs	Select and integrate research that is culturally responsive and critically informed to support interventions, organizational change, and program development.
	Identify ethical, culturally informed, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive strategies that address inherent biases for use in quantitative and qualitative research methods to advance the purposes of social work	Collaborate in the design or implementation of practice-based evaluations or inquiries that reflect anti-oppressive and ethical research methods.
		Critically assess the relevance and limitations of existing evidence in the context of client needs and practice settings.
Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice	Use social justice, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive lenses to assess how social welfare policies affect the delivery of and access to social services	Engage in critical policy analysis by evaluating the real-world effects of policy on historically marginalized groups and proposing responsive alternatives.
	Apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human	Use policy frameworks to inform practice decisions and contribute to agency or system-level change efforts.

	rights and social, racial, economic, and environmental justice	
Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Apply knowledge of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as interprofessional conceptual frameworks, to engage with clients and constituencies	Integrate and apply advanced knowledge of person-in-environment and systems theories to build effective engagement strategies across diverse practice settings.
	Use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to engage in culturally responsive practice with clients and constituencies	Demonstrate initiative in building collaborative relationships with individuals, groups, or communities by using intentional interpersonal and professional communication skills.
		Use reflection and critical thinking to tailor engagement approaches that consider cultural, environmental, and contextual factors influencing participation.
Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Apply theories of human behavior and person-in-environment, as well as other culturally responsive and interprofessional conceptual frameworks, when assessing clients and constituencies	Conduct comprehensive assessments that integrate systems-level analysis, contextual factors, and strengths-based frameworks across individual, group, and organizational levels.
	Demonstrate respect for client self-determination during the assessment process by collaborating with clients and constituencies in developing a mutually agreed-upon plan	Collaborate with clients, groups, or constituencies to co-construct assessment processes that reflect their goals, perspectives, and expertise.
		Select and adapt assessment methods appropriate for the population, setting, and practice focus, using critical analysis and feedback from supervision.
Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Engage with clients and constituencies to critically choose and implement culturally responsive, evidence-informed interventions to achieve client	Independently select and implement interventions that are evidence-informed, contextually appropriate, and aligned with client or community-defined

	and constituency goals	goals.
	Incorporate culturally responsive methods to negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies.	Apply negotiation, facilitation, and advocacy skills across systems to support effective culturally responsive interventions with diverse populations.
		Evaluate and revise intervention strategies through self-reflection, collaboration, and feedback from clients, supervisors, or team members.
Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities	Select and use culturally responsive methods for evaluation of outcomes	Design or contribute to culturally responsive evaluation strategies that assess both process and outcomes across micro, mezzo, or macro systems.
	Critically analyze outcomes and apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.	Use evaluation findings to make informed decisions about improving services, programs, or interventions in collaboration with clients or stakeholders.
		Critically reflect on outcome data, incorporating equity considerations, client voice, and organizational context into continuous quality improvement.

Admissions Criteria, Application Process and Procedures

To be considered for admission as a matriculated student in the MSW program, an applicant must provide all of the following to the **Office of Graduate Admissions** through the online link provided on the MSW webpage on the Ramapo website, <https://www.ramapo.edu/msw/>.

1. A completed application for admission includes a fee of \$65.
2. Minimum 3.00 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) earned in a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution for the Full-Time and Extended-Time programs. For the Advanced Standing program, there is a minimum of a 3.25 GPA. If a student does not meet the GPA requirement, they must demonstrate exceptional professional experience as determined in writing by the Dean of the respective academic unit determining admission.

3. To be considered for the Advanced Standing program, applicants must have successfully completed a CSWE-accredited BSW, including a passing grade in their practicum experience.
4. Conditional Advanced Standing admission may be granted to students still completing their BSW; however, admission is subject to successful completion of the degree and practicum. Failure to pass practicum or termination from placement may result in the revocation of admission.
5. Official transcripts are required from all institutions previously attended.
6. Official copies of scores earned on the GRE are not required for entrance to the MSW program. TOEFL is required for international students.
7. Two completed recommendation surveys attest to personal and professional qualifications from an employer, professor, or other professionals who can attest to graduate social work education readiness.
8. A three-five-page personal essay based on the following questions:

How do your values, philosophy, knowledge of social issues, and professional and community experiences align with the social work profession? Comment on your skills, strengths, and areas of needed improvement. Discuss your plans for a career in social work, including your reasons for choosing a particular focus of service.

The personal statement is a critical part of the admission application as a window into the applicant's writing skills and experiences, as well as their goals. Individual consultation regarding the application content is unavailable through the MSW or Graduate Admissions Office. Often, the personal statement will determine your success in the application process, so applicants need to pay particular attention to completing it well

MSW Application and Acceptance Process

1. When application elements are submitted, the applicant's file is referred to the MSW Faculty Admissions Committee for review. Review of applications by the committee may take two to four weeks.
2. Decisions made by the committee are reported to the Graduate Admissions Office, which will notify applicants of the final determination. An acceptance letter is sent from the Graduate Admissions Office notifying accepted applicants of:
 - Ramapo student ID#
 - Procedure to establish email
 - To reserve their seat by returning the enrollment form,
 - Introduction of Graduate Concierge Team - Academic Advisor, Financial Aid, Billing, and Admissions representative
 - Proof of Immunization (check with admissions)
3. Students may be accepted to the MSW program provisionally if their GPA is below the

required 3.0. Applicants with a GPA lower than 3.0 should discuss contributing factors in their narrative or interview and explain why they believe they can attain and maintain a 3.0 consistently in the MSW program. The student's grades will be reviewed at the close of the first semester. If the student achieves a 3.0 or above, the student will be in good academic standing. If the student's grade falls below 3.0, the student will be placed on probation. (See Graduate Policy on Academic Standing below.)

4. An acceptance letter is sent from the MSW program, Assistant Dean/Director of Social Work, welcoming the student into the program, providing information on the Practicum Education placement process, the registration process for MSW courses, and orientation information. Students should initiate the practicum placement process as soon as possible as placements are coordinated on a first come first serve basis. Placements should be finalized by August 1st prior to the Fall semester during which they are taking either MSWK 501 or MSWK 601.

Academic Advisement

The MSW Program's advisement process provides students with educational, vocational, and personal guidance. Academic advising is done by the director of the program and the program coordinator.

The primary objectives of the advisement process are:

- To assist students in planning their academic program.
- To provide students with an early and periodic assessment of their academic performance.
- To discuss with students and the program's Practicum Director the feasibility of practicum placements that best meet their educational and career goals and which are consistent with meeting the academic objectives of the social work program.
- To assist students in resolving any conflicts they may be experiencing in the classroom.
- To discuss their developmental/career goals with students and assist in developing a plan to meet them.

Students can request a meeting with an academic advisor at any point during their time in the program to discuss their academic schedules, career goals, and progress in the program. The Advisor is responsible for monitoring an advisee's educational progress and discussing any difficulties a student may be experiencing in the program.

MSW Program Policy on Life/Work Experience

The MSW Program does not grant course credit for life experience or previous work experience. The transfer of course credit for any course in the program's curriculum will not occur unless it is an equivalent course taken in an accredited CSWE program, as indicated by the syllabus review.

Up to 6 credits may be transferred into the MSW program. Students seeking to transfer social

work course credits from a CSWE-accredited program must provide the Director with a copy of the course syllabus and other documentation demonstrating equivalency. This policy ensures that students avoid redundant content and is accomplished in compliance with Ramapo's social work curriculum and the CSWE standards.

All graduate policies and procedures can be found in the [**Graduate Programs Policies and Procedures**](#).

Grading Policy for Graduate Education at Ramapo College

Listed below is the grading policy for graduate education at Ramapo College. Each professor develops rubrics for use in grading each assignment. The final course grade is as follows:

A	95-100
A-	90-94
B+	87-89
B	84-86
B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	70-76
F	0-69

Requirements for Study

Graduate social work students need:

1. An ability to think logically and conceptually and to formulate mature judgments
2. Excellent writing and verbal communication skills
3. Knowledge of the social work profession and readiness to be committed to it as a profession
4. Evidence of emotional maturity, concern for, and capacity for self-awareness and personal growth
5. Demonstrate concern and commitment to the values underlying professional social work
6. Respect for diversity and openness to life-long learning about one's self and others

If students are not able to meet the above requirements, they may be asked to leave the program.

Graduate Policy on Academic Standing

A 3.0 GPA is required for graduation. Graduate students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 to maintain good academic standing. Only degree required graduate courses taken at Ramapo College will be used in the GPA calculation. Courses transferred from other colleges count only as credits earned; accompanying grades are NOT calculated toward the grade point average at Ramapo.

Academic standing is calculated at the end of each cohort term or fall or spring semester commencing with the completion of the first term in which the student has earned a minimum of 6 program credits. If the student has a cumulative program GPA below 3.0, the student is placed on probation for one semester. Students placed on Academic Probation may not appeal their standing.

After the next cohort term, or fall or spring semester of enrollment, a student on continued probation is subject to the following conditions:

- If the student has a cumulative program GPA of at least 3.0, the student is in good standing after probation.
- If the student has a cumulative program GPA below 3.0, regardless of the term or semester GPA, the student will be dismissed with the right to appeal.
- Students in good standing after probation who fall below a cumulative program GPA of 3.0 for a second time are automatically dismissed from the program with the right to appeal.

Once final grades have been posted at the close of each semester, the Registrar's Office generates an Academic Standing List and provides the report to the program directors. The program directors review records of all graduate students enrolled in their respective programs at the College. Any student whose academic performance has fallen below the College's established standards (above) is advised of the deficiency in writing, via Ramapo College e-mail, by the program director, copied to the Dean, the chair of the Graduate Council and the registrar. Only degree-required graduate courses taken at Ramapo College will be used in the GPA calculation.

Procedures for Appealing Dismissal

A student who has been dismissed has the right to appeal and will be notified of that right and the deadline by which to appeal in the notification letter from the program director. The appeal deadline will be set three calendar days after notification from the program director. A student who wishes to appeal must submit an appeal letter electronically to the Graduate Council chair detailing reasons why they fell into academic difficulty and the strategies they will employ to raise their GPA in the future. The student may request supporting letters from graduate faculty and/or their respective program director or Dean. Supporting letters on official letterhead should be sent via Ramapo College email to the chair of the Graduate Council by the specified deadline. A student who does not appeal by the deadline is viewed as accepting their dismissal.

The chair of the Graduate Council will call a meeting (physical or virtual) of the five school deans to hear the appeal. The chair of the Graduate Council will also attend the meeting in ex officio, non-voting capacity. After considering the student's appeal and supporting

documentation, as well as information from the program director, the deans will take one of two actions:

- To uphold the student's dismissal from their graduate program;
- To reinstate the student on continued probation. At the end of the student's probationary term or semester, they must regain at least a 3.0 cumulative GPA or be dismissed with the right to appeal.

The chair of the Graduate Council will notify the student of the outcome via Ramapo College e-mail, copied to the program director, the Dean, and the registrar.

The decision of the Deans is final.

Policy on Academic Integrity

Students are expected to read and understand Ramapo College's academic integrity policy, which can be found online in the College Catalog <https://www.ramapo.edu/catalog-2022-2023/masters/>.

The Ramapo College community members are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Students who violate this policy will be required to meet with the faculty member and/or be referred to the Office of the Provost, which will adjudicate the matter.

Academic and Practicum Review Committee (APRC)

The Academic and Practicum Review Committee (APRC) serves as the formal review process for students in the BSW and MSW programs who are experiencing significant academic or practicum-related concerns. While the APRC may be used to address academic performance issues, it is most often engaged when a student's practicum progress has been interrupted due to concerns such as termination, non-passing evaluations, or issues related to professional or unethical conduct.

The purpose of the APRC process is not punitive. Rather, it is designed to support students by collaboratively identifying the best path forward and ensuring readiness for future academic or practicum experiences. The goal of the APRC meeting is to promote success by reviewing what occurred, what can be learned, and what steps are needed for the student to move forward confidently and ethically in the program.

When an APRC Meeting is Required

An APRC meeting is required when any of the following situations occur:

- The student is terminated from a practicum placement
- The student receives a failing evaluation for practicum *Students are expected to achieve at least a 3 in all areas to demonstrate competence. Students with 2 or below in any area may be subject to failing practicum.*
- The student receives an incomplete grade in a practicum course due to termination and requires a new placement

- The student is not accepted by two different internship sites during placement coordination
- The student is denied a second or third placement due to performance or ethical issues
- The student experiences a serious academic concern or unprofessional/unethical that affects program progression

In these cases, an APRC Referral Form will be completed and submitted by the Practicum Staff Member (for practicum-related concerns) or a faculty member (for academic issues). Students will be notified in writing that they are being referred to APRC and will receive clear instructions on the next steps.

Student Responsibilities

Students referred to APRC must take the following steps:

1. Submit a written reflection within 5 working days of the formal referral. This should be addressed to the Director of Practicum Education, the MSW Program Director or BSW Convener, and the Social Work Program Coordinator, and must include:
 - An acknowledgment of the circumstances that led to the termination or concern
 - A reflection on lessons learned or areas for growth
 - A request for continuation in the program and, if applicable, a new practicum placement
 - A proposed plan for addressing the identified concerns (e.g., workshops, counseling, academic support)
 - A proposed agency where the required hours and competencies can be met if a new placement is needed
2. Prepare for the APRC meeting, which will be scheduled after the written reflection is received. Students may bring a support person to the meeting (e.g., a peer, counselor, or mentor), though that individual may not verbally contribute to the meeting and are there for emotional support purposes.

Composition of the APRC

The APRC meeting will be led by the Director of Practicum Education and the MSW Program Director or BSW Convener. Depending on the nature of the concern, additional individuals such as the Practicum Liaison, Practicum Coordinator, or a faculty member may be invited to participate as appropriate. The Social Work Program Coordinator will also be present for documentation purposes.

The APRC Meeting

The APRC meeting is an opportunity to:

- Review the circumstances that led to the referral
- Hear directly from the student about their experience, reflections, and goals
- Identify specific steps the student must take to continue in the program or be re-placed in practicum
- Establish conditions or timelines for re-entry, if applicable

Following the meeting, the student will receive a written summary of the decision and any conditions or recommendations (e.g., re-taking a course, completing training, or attending

therapy). The outcome may include approval for a new placement, a delay in re-placement, or, in some cases, a decision that the student may not continue in the program during which program termination procedures will follow.

Conclusion

Practicum education is a core component of social work education and is directly tied to required academic courses. To pass, students must demonstrate both classroom competence and successful performance in the practicum. A student who performs well academically but does not meet practicum expectations may earn no higher than a “D” in the course.

Additionally, students may fail practicum outright if their performance violates professional or ethical standards, regardless of classroom success. In such cases, the Academic and Practicum Review Committee (APRC) may offer an opportunity to pursue another placement, but this does not remove the failing grade from the original course.

This policy underscores that social work education requires integration of knowledge, skills, and values across both academic and practicum settings to ensure readiness for professional practice.

Graduation Requirements

Admission to a Graduate Program does not mean acceptance to candidacy for the Master’s Degree. In order to be eligible for graduation, the student must have:

1. Completed 60 credit hours required for the MSW degree (30 credits for Advanced Standing) with a minimum cumulative **GPA of 3.0**.
2. Filed a completed degree evaluation and graduation application.

Satisfactory Progress

1. Graduate students must complete program requirements within five years. Students who wish to appeal this time limit must write to the Program Director, who will make a recommendation to the Dean.
2. Students must make satisfactory academic progress (i.e., completion of a specified number of credits per year) within their program unless a Leave of Absence has been granted. ‘Satisfactory Academic Progress’ is determined by each program and stated on the program website.

Appeals of Academic Standing

The faculty of the College establishes course requirements and performance standards. Faculty evaluation of students’ academic performance is a qualitative judgment and is expressed through submitting final course grades to the Registrar at the close of each semester.

In those instances where a student wishes to appeal an Academic Dismissal, the student should appeal in writing to the Graduate Council through the Chair within five business days of posting grades at the end of the fall or the spring semester. The student should explain any unusual circumstances that contributed to the academic difficulty and describe how they can make better

progress if reinstated. An academic plan for the following two semesters must be included. Supporting documentation may include, but is not limited to, letters of recommendation from Ramapo faculty/staff and/or letters from medical practitioners documenting that the student was receiving care during the current semester.

After having considered the appeal, the Graduate Council recommends either (1) that the student may remain at the College on academic probation for one additional semester or (2) that the student will be permanently dismissed from the College's graduate programs. A student who does NOT appeal to the Graduate Council in writing by the designated deadline is viewed as accepting the permanent dismissal.

The decision of the Graduate Council is final. The Chair of the Graduate Council will notify the student of the decision, with copies of the letter to the dean and program director.

Termination

If a student's academic or non-academic performance is deemed unsuitable for continuation in the program, the Program Director will convene a meeting of the social work faculty to review the student's academic record and other relevant materials. If the faculty votes to move forward with terminating the student from the program, the following procedures are followed:

1. The Program Director, after consulting with social work faculty, informs the student verbally and in writing that they are being terminated from the Social Work Program. The letter to the student will include reasons supporting this action and make the student aware that they have the right to appeal this decision.
2. If the student chooses to appeal, they must make this request in writing to the Program Director within two weeks of receiving the Program Director's letter.
3. Following the student's request for an appeal, the Program Director will arrange a hearing before the social work faculty, where the student may present any relevant materials and arguments they deem necessary for their defense.
4. After hearing the student's appeal and re-examining pertinent information, such as the student's academic work, practicum performance, and/or behavior, the faculty will vote to sustain or reverse its original recommendation.
5. The Program Director will inform the student of the social work faculty's decision in writing. If the decision remains negative, the student is notified of their right to appeal this decision in writing to the School's Dean.
6. In the event of an appeal, the School's Dean will confer with the student and the Program Director, jointly or independently as they see fit, to review all evidence relating to the case and render a decision either affirming or overruling the decision to terminate. If the Dean renders a decision that affirms the faculty's decision to terminate the student from the program, the student is notified in writing and informed that they have the right to appeal the Dean's decision to the Provost. Conversely, the Program Director can

appeal the Dean's decision if it overrules the social work faculty's decision to terminate the student from the program. In either case, a request for an appeal to the Provost must be made in writing.

7. The Provost or their designated officer will confer with the student and the Program Director, review pertinent information, and render a final decision.

Ramapo College Graduate Council

The Graduate Council shall (1) recommend standards and regulations affecting Graduate curricula and work leading to a graduate degree and (2) institute standards and regulations as delegated by the faculty. The Graduate Council shall serve and act on behalf of the faculty and students in the Graduate Programs. Members of the Graduate Council include the Deans of the Schools and the Library, the Vice Provost for Curriculum and Assessment, the Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management, the Registrar, Graduate Program Directors, the Associate Director for Admissions: Adult Learners and Graduate Programs, and representatives from ARC and the Faculty Assembly. The Graduate Council shall meet monthly during the academic year. Special meetings can be arranged.

The Graduate Council shall perform the following duties:

1. Review and recommend minimum standards for graduate student admission.
2. Review and recommend basic requirements for graduate degrees.
3. Review and recommend new and revised graduate degree programs.
4. Recommend a policy on financial support for graduate students.
5. Develop strategies for increasing financial support for graduate students and graduate programs.
6. Hear appeals of academic dismissal and time limits. A subcommittee may be convened to hear these appeals.

Graduate Directors Committee

The Graduate Council Directors Committee will be composed of the graduate Program Directors. The committee members shall appoint one of their members as the committee chair. The charge of this committee is to (1) review and recommend graduate course proposals for submission to ARC, and (2) review and discuss other academic (e.g., curricular and assessment) and programmatic issues for submission to the Graduate Council.

Social Work Club

The Social Work Club welcomes all Ramapo College students, including social work and non-social work majors, as well as undergraduate and graduate students to collaborate on social service projects, listen to guest speakers, share ideas, and work together to create change locally and globally. In addition, students engage in a variety of activities with the support of advisors and based on the ideas and interests of the members.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

THETA DELTA CHAPTER AT RAMAPO COLLEGE

In July 1978, the Social Work Program of Ramapo College of New Jersey was approved as a chapter in the Phi Alpha National Honor Society. During the first year of the Theta Delta Chapter 28, juniors and seniors were installed as members.

The Phi Alpha Honor Society was established in 1962. The purposes of the society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideas. Phi Alpha fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarship and achievement in social work. There are currently more than 155 chapters throughout the United States in accredited BSW and MSW programs.

Although the National Council is the policy-making body, each chapter can develop a program to meet local needs. Membership may be offered to students, faculty and practitioners. Each chapter may select two honorary members each year.

Membership shall be available to all eligible persons regardless of age, gender, color, race, creed, ethnic or national origin, political or sexual orientation, or disability. Eligibility criteria for MSW students are a GPA of 3.5 based on a 4.0 credit system after 32 credits and enrollment in Social Work Theory and Practice III courses. Matriculated MSW students will be eligible for membership upon completion of accreditation of the MSW program.

Student Rights

- Social work students have input into formulating and modifying program policies, curriculum development, student affairs, hiring new faculty, and program evaluation. To submit input, students can use the [Student Survey](#), available throughout the academic year.
- Applicants for faculty positions who are chosen as finalists must teach a class, and student feedback is crucial in determining the final decision.
- All social work students have input into curriculum and program modification through course evaluations completed at the end of each semester.
- Student evaluations of practicum agencies are completed annually.
- Students are permitted representation on the College's Board of Trustees.
- Social Work students have the unfettered right to organize and present their views to the social work faculty, the Program Director, the School's Unit Council, or to any other authoritative body at the College.
- All students at the College have the right to participate in Student Government, which is their primary governance organization.
- Graduate social work students have the right to organize a student organization to represent their rights in the School of Social Science and Human Services.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

MSWK 501 – Social Work Theory and Practice I – 6 credits – (Prerequisite for MSWK 502)

Students develop foundational social work practice skills with individuals and families in diverse settings through classroom learning and supervised practicum. Through critical thinking, ethics and a social justice lens, students connect social work theories with practice skills and utilize research-informed approaches. The practicum instruction component requires 250 hours of supervised agency-based practice, where students apply classroom learning in real-world settings.

MSWK 502 – Social Work Theory and Practice II – 6 credits – (Prerequisite for 601 & 602)

This course builds on the foundational values, knowledge, and skills introduced in T&P 1, with an emphasis on short-term, crisis, and extended intervention models. Students deepen their abilities in self-evaluation, practice evaluation, and advanced intervention approaches with individuals and families. Topics include agency and community practice and the process of termination. Students continue their practicum placement from the first semester, completing an additional 250 hours of supervised agency-based practice totaling 500 hours for the foundation year, progressing toward competency as generalist social workers.

MSWK 503 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (HBSE I) – 3 credit- hours

(Prerequisite for HBSE II)

Human Behavior and the Social Environment I is the first of two courses in the Human Behavior and the Social Environment sequence. Students are introduced to substantive theories relevant to human development and social problems with a specific focus on the systemic and reciprocal influences of individuals and their environment. Theories to inform social work practice from individual systems, social systems, and other complex systems are reviewed.

MSWK 504 Human Behavior and the Social Environment (HBSE II) – 3 credit- hours

(Prerequisite for 505)

This course takes a biopsychosocial approach to examining the human life cycle from conception through death. At each stage it considers both optimal development and the vicissitudes that may arise from biological, psychological, and social/environmental challenges or deficits. Similarly, the role of social supports, life stressors, coping strategies and resilience factors will be examined. Through both classical and contemporary readings, writing assignments, and personal reflection, students will explore the implications of course material for the practice of social work on micro, mezzo, and macro levels. They will integrate and further develop their mastery of theory as they apply it to the entire life cycle.

MSWK 505 Social Welfare Programs and Policies I – 3 credit-hours – (Prerequisite for MSWK 604)

As major providers of social welfare benefits, social workers must also understand the history and formation and implementation of social policy at the local, state and federal levels. Attention is focused on social welfare policies within their political and historical contexts, the socio economic forces that impact them, their differential effects on populations at risk and other groups, their social justice implications, and their system stabilization and destabilization dimensions. Readings and class discussions are designed to enhance understanding of the impact of social welfare policies on oppressed populations of historic concern to the profession like the poor, women, minorities, immigrant groups, as well as the mentally and physically disabled, the elderly, children and families, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.

Social Work Programs and Policy is a required course of the professional foundation year, and prepares students for Social Work Policy II taken in the advanced concentration year. The course explores the interplay between values, political and economic structures and how these impacts social welfare policy development, create or limit access and availability to social welfare services and benefits, and examines current events and policy issues that arise throughout the semester to facilitate class discussions and provide examples of the policy process in practice. At the conclusion of the course, it is expected that students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical development and ideological aspects of social policy in the United States and other countries. Students are encouraged to bring in their own agency experiences to relate the process of policy development and implementation.

MSWK 506 Social Work Research I – 3 credit-hours - (Prerequisite for MSWK 605)

Research I introduces the principles and methods of research with particular emphasis on the ethical nature of research. Principles of conceptualization, research design, sampling, instrumentation, descriptive and inferential data analysis, scientific report writing, and the significance of research for social work practice will be emphasized. Attention will be placed on developing strengths-based performance indicators. This course is the first of a two-course research sequence that provides an overview of basic scientific methods, processes, and statistical procedures useful for providing the foundation for evaluating practice, program, and policy. This course focuses on the basic concepts of scientific inquiry that includes both qualitative and quantitative research strategies and data analysis. This course emphasizes being able to think critically, develop and use strengths-based performance indicators, and build upon an advanced generalist perspective practiced in other foundation courses.

Students will understand and be able to apply sound research techniques that are appropriate for use with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, communities, and institutions with emphasis placed on sensitivity to their application to minorities and other oppressed and vulnerable groups. This course relates to the mission of the university, college, and program in

that it provides the knowledge and skill needed to support economic development through applied research to address society's ever changing demands for health and human services.

The major practice themes of this course include being able to use practice wisdom to select topics, develop strengths based and/or problem formulations, select literature for review, and to select data that are important to the profession. Students must also be able to use research evidence they discovered by reviewing the literature, testing hypotheses, using sound research methodologies, and the logic and application of data analysis and statistical techniques to provide information that may be used to improve practice. Students also must demonstrate their skill in scientific report writing, and the dissemination and communication of results. In summary they will be able to critically examine, interpret, and conduct and apply research findings that are useful in all aspects of social work practice with systems of all sizes including evaluating their own practice. Additionally, social work values and the code of ethics will serve as guides to decision making in developing and implementing research strategies, in critically reviewing research, and in carrying out other activities throughout this class and in practice.

MSWK 507 Cultural Diversity/Oppression, Racism, Privilege – 3 credit hours - This course This course will focus on aspects and configurations of cultural and human diversity within the social environment. The course will examine individual, group, and community responses to cultural diversity and discrimination. Racism, sexism, ethnicity, ageism, homophobia, social class, and discrimination against the physically disabled and persons will be explored from a developmental and ecological systems perspective. The student will analyze selected theories, concepts, and empirical data related to the harmful effects of inequality, discrimination, prejudice and oppression.

MSWK 508 Clinical Practice with Groups – 3 credit-hours – (Prerequisite for concentration courses)

Clinical Practice with Groups introduces students to groups that function as an intervention in social work settings. Diagnostic and treatment procedures in a wide range of group settings are examined, including intensive group therapy, socialization, social support, psychological treatment, self-help, mutual aid, advocacy, and prevention. Particular attention is given to the recruitment and composition of groups, contracting and goal setting, leadership, structure of groups, phases of group development, conflict resolution, termination and evaluation of evidenced based group intervention. The ability to differentially use the professional self in various group modalities is a focus as well as are the ethical and social justice implications of engaging or of not engaging this practice modality. This course provides an opportunity for students to develop the knowledge, skills and abilities to function as a group facilitator. While we will be studying about groups through lectures, readings, videos and assignments, you will also have the opportunity to experience groups in different ways.

MSWK 601 Social Work Theory and Practice III – 6 credit-hours –
(Prerequisite for MSWK 602)

Students advance their clinical practice skills by working with children, adolescents, and families, incorporating evidence-based methodologies and cross-cultural perspectives. The course emphasizes direct practice interventions while addressing diversity, social justice, and environmental factors affecting client well-being. Professional values and ethics are explored. Students complete 250 hours of supervised agency-based practice focused on these specialized skills.

MSWK 602 Social Work Theory and Practice IV – 6 credit hours

As the final required practice course, students synthesize knowledge from practice, diversity, and policy courses while developing their professional social work identity and advanced ethical practice capabilities. License Social Work exam preparation is incorporated into classwork. Students continue their practicum placement from the fall semester, completing an additional 250 hours of agency-based practice, totaling 500 hours for the advanced practice year.

MSWK 603 Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work – 3 credit hours

Psychopathology and Diagnosis in Clinical Social Work will provide the student with exposure to major issues in the area of child and adult psychopathology and diagnosis of mental disorders. The course examines psychopathology and mental disorders from a biopsychosocial and ethnocultural perspective. Emphasis is placed on understanding biopsychosocial influences on the incidence, manifestation, and course of the most commonly presented mental disorders and the differential effect of these factors on diverse populations. Current research from biological psychiatry and the behavioral sciences regarding the impact of poverty, race/ethnicity, class, and labeling theories and the stress and social support model are highlighted. Students pay special attention to understanding the human experience of mental illness and the experience of family members and significant others. Students deepen and extend their assessment and intervention skills in work with individuals and families who face challenges with a range of problems commonly found in clients with mental illness such as dual diagnoses, substance abuse, trauma, physical illness, disability, and poverty. The DSM 5TR is used as an organizing framework to teach diagnostic skills so the student may be adept at providing a comprehensive assessment to insure appropriate intervention.

MSWK 604 Advanced Social Policy – 3 credit hours

Advanced Social Policy is a required course in the advanced concentration year of the MSW program and is taken after successful completion of Social Welfare Programs and Policy I. This advanced concentration course examines local, state and federal social problems from the perspective of their impact on individuals, families, and communities, focusing on at-risk populations in the context of an urban environment. The course builds on the policy content offered in the Professional Foundation Year and links policy to practice and research skills that have been developed. Emphasis is placed on the link between social and economic justice and issues relating to diversity and social action. The first part of the course is an examination of the policy making cycle, inclusive of social problem definition, policy formulation, implementation

and critical analysis of policy. A detailed section on evaluation of policies as they affect societal structures, communities, agencies, clients and practitioners is then discussed. Finally, a major section of the course presents theories related to organizational change and strategies for practitioners to influence policies and promote change at the client level, the agency level, the community level and the broader society.

MSWK 605 Social Work Research II: Practice Evaluation – 3 credit hours – This course is the second of a two-course research sequence. The course builds upon the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and statistical techniques practiced in SWRK 506 and builds upon an advanced generalist perspective learned in other advanced practice courses. The course explores advanced techniques for evaluating systems of all sizes and is specifically designed for those in the advanced practice stage of learning who are going to evaluate practice. Methods and strategies for conducting program evaluation and single system research will be emphasized. Special emphasis will be placed on developing strengths-based performance indicators.

Appendix B

Social Work Practice, Education, and Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (2022)

<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>

Appendix C

NASW Code of Ethics Preamble

Revised by the 2021 NASW Delegate Assembly

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

Appendix D

Ramapo College Anti-Discrimination Policy

<https://www.ramapo.edu/affirmaction/complaint-processing-forms/>

Appendix E

Ramapo Graduate Student Handbook

<https://www.ramapo.edu/student-conduct/student-handbook/>