

## Standards & Expectations of a BYU Social Work Student

In addition to scholastic achievement, the following physical, cognitive, emotional, and character attributes provide reasonable assurance that students can effectively complete the BYU Master of Social Work (MSW) program and adhere to standards of professional social work practice. As the acquisition of competence as a social worker is a gradual process, students are expected to continually develop these attributes as they progress through all aspects of the program, including the classroom, field placements, and other areas of professional social work practice.

Accepting admission into the MSW program, students commit that they have the following abilities and attributes and will conduct themselves according to the following requirements:

**Physical and Motor Skills** Students should exhibit sufficient motor and sensory abilities to attend and participate in class and field placement, with or without accommodations (see the BYU Accessibility Center (<https://uac.byu.edu/>) for additional information).

**Communication Skills** Students must have the ability to process information and communicate effectively with instructors, other students, faculty members, staff, clients, and other professionals. Students must have sufficient skills in written and spoken English.

**Ethical Standards** Students are ethically and professionally bound to adhere to the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics and applicable state laws. In addition, it is essential that students demonstrate empathy, appreciation for diverse life experiences, and develop a non-judgmental attitude in their interaction with others. Confidentiality is foundational to the profession of social work.

**Knowledge Base** Students recognize ecological systems and distinct components of the biopsychosocial and spiritual perspectives of social work practice and methodologies.

**Professionalism** Students are expected to demonstrate professional conduct, including practicing within the appropriate scope of social work, adhering to the limit of their knowledge and skills in the delivery of services to clients, respecting others, being punctual and dependable, completing assignments and reports in a timely manner, and prioritizing professional responsibilities. Appearance and personal demeanor should reflect an appropriate understanding of the professional context. Conflict resolution should follow proper channels of authority, with feedback given and/or received in a professional manner. Respect should be shown to fellow students, faculty, staff, clients, and colleagues in the classroom and in the field. Disrespectful behavior toward others or any form of sexual harassment will not be tolerated.

**Self-Awareness** Students need to recognize within themselves the signs of stress and emotional challenges, develop appropriate means of self-care, and seek supportive services when necessary to minimize any adverse impact on academic and professional performance. Students seek the advice of faculty advisors and access relevant supports as needed. Students are open to recommendations regarding the appropriate maintenance of their academic, physical, or mental health.

**Objectivity** Students are expected to learn the knowledge, values, skills, and processes required for professional practice. Students should not impose their own personal, religious, sexual, and/or cultural values on their clients. Students are willing to examine diverse perspectives and maintain professional behavior with clients and other professionals.

**Empathy** Students should seek to understand and respect another individual's feelings, values, and way of life. Students must be able to communicate empathy and support to the client as a basis for a productive professional relationship.

**Acceptance of Diversity** Students are expected to demonstrate an understanding and respect for belonging, diversity, equity, and inclusion, regardless of race, ethnicity, age, class, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religious affiliation, marital status, political belief, tribal or immigration status, mental or physical ability, veteran status, or value system.

**BYU Mission Fit** Students should contribute to and support the academic and religious mission of the University, including the spiritually strengthening aim of a BYU education. Students agree to abide by the Honor Code and Dress and Grooming standards.

(updated 8/3/2023)