

**Rutgers University School of Social Work MSW Program  
Policy Statement on Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct**

**Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct**

As the Rutgers University MSW program seeks to prepare students for professional and ethical social work practice, MSW students are expected to maintain a high level of professional and ethical conduct and adhere as closely as possible to professional and ethical standards articulated in the *NASW Code of Ethics*. The following standards, distinguished from academic standards, describe the pre-professional cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal standards necessary to provide reasonable assurance that students can complete the entire course of study and participate fully in all aspects of social work education and practice. Acquisition of competence as a social worker is a lengthy and complex process that will be undermined by significant limitations of the student's ability to participate in the full spectrum of the experiences and the requirements of the curriculum.

Students in the School of Social Work are expected to possess the following abilities and attributes at a level appropriate to their years in the program. They are expected to meet these standards in the classroom and in their field education practice. Attention to these standards will be evaluated in students' classroom and practicum performances. Failure to maintain these standards at a level appropriate to their years in the program may result in a review by the School of Social Work's Committee on Students, or other possible sanctions.

**Professional Communication**

The social work student must communicate effectively and professionally with other students, faculty, staff, clients, field supervisors and other professionals. These standards include, but are not limited to, civility and respectful communication; respectful attention and responsiveness to feedback in communication; self-awareness in communication, including the ability to control one's emotional reactions and personal stress in communications with others; the ability to effectively communicate academic and professional challenges and problem solve around these challenges with appropriate supports; and the minimization of inappropriate mobile communication device usage in professional and academic settings.

**Professional Commitment and Behavior**

The social work student must behave professionally and demonstrate a commitment to the professional values and ethics at a level appropriate to their years in the program. Demonstration of professional commitment and behavior includes, but is not limited to, adherence to the *NASW Code of Ethics* (including but not limited to a confidentiality; adherence to appropriate professional boundaries in client (current and former)-worker relationships; confidentiality); investment in one's education (including, but not limited to, class and field attendance, preparation for and active participation in class); demonstration of initiative and self-motivation in classroom and field settings; self-care and the ability to control emotional reactions and personal stress so it does not impact professional judgement and performance; appropriate professional attire in professional settings; and, refrain from impaired practice by allowing their own personal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their

professional judgment and performance.

### **Respect for Diversity and Commitment to Social Justice**

The social work student must appreciate the value of human diversity and demonstrate a commitment to understanding cultural difference and practicing cultural humility. The student 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 identification, ability, sexual orientation, and value system. The student should also respect cultural differences among their peers, faculty, supervisors and other professionals. The student should recognize how larger social inequalities impact the individuals and communities they serve and integrate social work methods that address the eradication of social injustice into their practice as professionally appropriate.