

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK MSW PROGRAM HANDBOOK



Rev. January 2024

Contents

Section I: Introduction..... 4

- Governors State University 4
- College of Health and Human Services..... 4
- Department of Social Work..... 4
 - Mission and values 4
 - Faculty and Staff 4
 - Committees..... 5
 - Student Organizations 5

Section II: The Master of Social Work Program 6

- MSW Degree Requirements..... 6
- Generalist Curriculum 6
- Advanced-Level Specialization Curriculum..... 6
 - Child and Family Specialization..... 6
 - School Social Work Specialization 6
- Plans of Study: Full Program MSW, Advanced Standing MSW, and Post-MSW Certificate 7
 - Full Program Master of Social Work 7
 - Advanced Standing Master of Social Work 9
 - Post-MSW Professional Educator License Certificate 10
- Field Education 10
- Advising 11

Section III: Policies 11

- Student Responsibilities - 100 11
 - Policy 101 - Academic Advisement 11
 - Policy 102 - Student Plan of Study 12
 - Policy 103 - MSW Candidacy..... 12
 - Policy 104 - Graduation Application..... 12
- Student Status - 200..... 13
 - Policy 201 - MSW Admission Policy 13
 - Policy 211 – Admission to Post-MSW Certificate Program 14
 - Policy 202 - Academic Progression..... 14
 - Policy 203 - Non-Academic Performance..... 16
 - Policy 204 – Leave of absence 16
 - Policy 205 - Withdrawal from a course..... 16

Policy 206 – Withdrawal from the MSW Program	17
Policy 207 - Reinstatement to the MSW Program.....	17
Policy 209 - Incomplete Grade Option.....	18
Policy 210 - Academic Standing	18
Class Requirements – 300	19
Policy 301 – Attendance.....	19
Policy 302 - Class Cancellation.....	20
Policy 303 - Communication.....	20
Policy 304 - Use of Electronic Devices.....	20
Student Conduct – 400	21
Policy 401 - Professional behavior.....	21
Policy 402 - Academic Integrity.....	22
Policy 403 – Professional and Academic violations.....	22
Policy 404 - Student Complaints.....	23
Policy 405 - Student Grievances	24
Field Education – 500.....	24
Section IV: Resources	24
Student Support Services.....	24
Counseling and Wellness Center.....	24
GSU4U.....	25
Access Services for Students with Disabilities.....	25
Center for Student Engagement and Intercultural Programs	25
Office of Financial Aid.....	25
Undocumented Student Resources	26
Veterans Resource Center	26
Academic Support Services.....	26
Academic Resource Center	26
Library.....	26
Writing Center.....	26

Section I: Introduction

Governors State University

Governors State University is committed to offering an exceptional and accessible education that prepares students with the knowledge, skills and confidence to succeed in a global society.

College of Health and Human Services

The mission of the College of Health and Human Services is to “Provide accessible and quality health and human services professions education; Foster a commitment to lifelong learning, scholarship, professional ethics, diversity, and social justice; and Infuse its programs into community partnerships for the health, well-being and economic development of the region.”

Department of Social Work

Mission and values

The Master of Social Work Program at Governors State University is dedicated to preparing advanced generalist practitioners grounded in a social justice ethos. Students are prepared to specialize in the areas of school social work and child welfare. Students demonstrate proficiency in knowledge, values, and skill-based competencies needed to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Students promote and advocate for diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within program and policy development through community-engaged activities.

Faculty and Staff

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Committees

MSW Admissions Committee

The MSW Admissions Committee reviews applications to the MSW program and makes admissions recommendations to the Department of Social Work. The committee also reviews admissions policies and procedures and recommends changes to the MSW Program Coordinator and Department Chair. Membership includes: Faculty, MSW Program Coordinator, and Department Chair.

Search Committees

As needed, Search Committees for new faculty are formed. The Committee is charged with reviewing applications, conducting preliminary interviews, scheduling campus visits, and providing feedback to the Department Chair. Membership includes at least three faculty members and at least one student is invited to participate on each Search Committee.

Curriculum Committee

The Curriculum Committee oversees the content and quality of courses in the MSW and post-MSW programs. This Committee is responsible for ensuring that all courses and syllabi reflect the mission of the Social Work Department and the policies of the Council on Social Work Education. Membership includes Faculty and at least one student is invited to participate in the committee.

Social Work Advisory Board

The overall purpose of the Advisory Board is to provide a diversity of expert community support to social work students, faculty, and the chair of the social work department. The role of an Advisory Board member is to act as: (1) a community ambassador for the social work department, (2) a collaborator in providing opportunities for program and student academic excellence and, (3) a partner in supporting and promoting the departments' social justice mission. Membership includes Faculty, Community members, and at least one student is invited to participate on this Advisory Board.

Student Organizations

Social Work Student Organization (SWSO)

Membership in this organization is open to all social work students attending Governors State University. The Social Work Student Organization (SWSO) seeks to inform, educate, and engage social work students at Governors State University. We are committed to calling attention to and working to address social justice issues through advocacy and community service opportunities. Additionally, we work to end the stigma around mental health services and promote self-care among social work students. Ultimately, SWSO exists to support the development of social work students and the social work profession. For more information, including events and activities, please visit Jaguar Connect: <https://govst.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/swso>.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

Omicron Beta is the Governors State University chapter of the national social work honor society. The chapter was established in February 2008. The purposes of Phi Alpha Honor Society are to provide a closer bond among students of social work and promote humanitarian goals and ideals. In concert with Phi Alpha, Omicron Beta fosters high standards of education for social workers and invites into membership those who have attained excellence in scholarships and achievement in social work. For additional information about the honor society, including eligibility criteria, please visit the national Phi Alpha website: www.phialpha.org. For more information about Omicron Beta, including events and activities, please visit Jaguar Connect: <https://govst.campuslabs.com/engage/organization/phialpha>.

Section II: The Master of Social Work Program

MSW Degree Requirements

The MSW program offers two (2) degree programs: Full Program and the Advanced Standing degree program. The Full Program consists of 60 credit-hours of course work in the foundation and advanced-level specialization curriculum. The Advanced Standing program consists of 32 credit-hours of course work, including the advanced-level specialization curriculum. The Advanced Standing program is restricted to prospective students who have completed a baccalaureate degree program in a social work education program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) within seven years from the date of application to the MSW program and who earned a 3.0 cumulative GPA. The MSW program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (<http://www.cswe.org>).

Generalist Curriculum

The generalist curriculum prepares students with a social justice ethos to promote human rights and to advocate for racial and social justice through generalist practice. The curriculum focuses on the person-in-environment (PIE) perspective as they assess, engage, intervene, and evaluate their practice with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

Advanced-Level Specialization Curriculum

The advanced-level specialization curriculum prepares students for professional practice in social service agencies serving children, adolescents, adults, and families. The primary goal of the GovState MSW program is to prepare highly qualified, competent advanced social work professionals to engage in critical practice from a social justice ethos. Graduates are prepared to practice in a variety of settings, including advocacy organizations, community mental health, counseling centers, family services, public child welfare agencies, and Veteran services.

After earning a master's degree in social work and meeting additional state requirements, graduates can immediately apply to become a Licensed Social Worker (LSW) in Illinois. Typically, to become a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), 3,000 clock hours of post-MSW supervision and a clinical exam are required (reference your state guidelines).

Students may focus their graduate studies in two areas of specialization:

- **School Social Work** (Professional Educator License/PEL)
- **Child and Family** (*with the option of a subspecialty*):
 - Mental Health subspecialty
 - Licensed Child Welfare Practice subspecialty (Illinois Child Welfare Employee License/CWEL)

School Social Work Specialization

This specialization prepares advanced professionals to practice in primary and secondary school settings, including serving students with mental health and behavioral concerns at the individual and group level. This program has been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to prepare candidates for the Professional Educator License (PEL) in School Social Work. Candidates must pass the ILTS content test to become entitled for school social work licensure.

Child and Family Specialization

This specialization prepares advanced professionals to serve and empower children, adolescents, adults, and families from socially and economically diverse backgrounds. The curriculum is founded on evidence-based practices and prepares students to use strengths-based and ecosystems approaches.

Plans of Study: Full Program MSW, Advanced Standing MSW, and Post-MSW Certificate

Full Program Master of Social Work

The Full MSW Program is comprised of 60 credit hours for students without a (BSW) degree from a CSWE accredited program within seven years from the date of application. Students can complete their studies on a full-time or part-time basis:

- Full-time (2 years) - 4-6 semesters, 12-16 credit hours per semester.
- Part-time (3 years) - 6-9 semesters, 9-11 credit hours per semester.
- Part-time (4 years) - 8-12 semesters, 6-9 credit hours per semester.

Students complete field education at the foundation and advanced levels. Each level requires a Fall and Spring term of field education, totaling four semesters of field education.

- 14 hours weekly at the foundation level
- 16-20 hours weekly at the advanced level based on practice specialization

Master of Social Work Full Program Curriculum Requirements by Specialization		
COURSE#	COURSE NAME	CREDITS
Generalist Curriculum before School Social Work Specialization		
SOCW 6100	Social Work Profession in Diverse Society	3
SOCW 6200	Human Behavior in the Social Environment	3
SOCW 6400	Social Welfare Policy and Provisions	3
SOCW 7200	Social Work Practice I	3
SOCW 7500	Field Practicum I	2
SOCW 7501	Field Integrative Seminar I	2
SPED 6101	Survey of Exceptional Students	3
SOCW 6300	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3
SOCW 6500	Social Work Research	3
SOCW 7100	Social Work Practice II	3
SOCW 7600	Field Practicum II	2
SOCW 7601	Field Integrative Seminar II	2
School Social Work Specialization / Enter Candidacy & Start the Specialization		
SOCW 8100	Contexts and Theories in Practice	3
SOCW 7050/8060	Elective (must satisfy prerequisite)	3
SOCW 8210	Practice in Schools	3
SOCW 8600	Field Practicum III	3
SOCW 8601	Field Integrative Seminar III	2
SOCW 8300	Advanced Practice with Children & Families	3
SOCW 8400	Practice Evaluation	3
SOCW 8510	Policy for School Social Workers	3
SOCW 8700	Field Practicum IV	3
SOCW 8701	Field Integrative Seminar IV	2

	TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS	60
Generalist Curriculum before: Child and Family Specialization		
COURSE#	COURSE NAME	CREDITS
SOCW 6100	Social Work in a Diverse Society	3
SOCW 6200	Human Behavior in the Social Environment I	3
SOCW 6400	Social Welfare Policies and Provisions	3
SOCW 7200	Social Work Practice	3
SOCW 7500	Field Practicum I	2
SOCW 7501	Field Integrative Seminar I	2
SOCW 6300	Human Behavior in the Social Environment II	3
SOCW 6500	Social Work Research	3
SOCW 7050/8060*	One Elective (see electives information below)	3
SOCW 7100	Social Work Practice II	3
SOCW 7600	Field Practicum II	2
SOCW 7601	Field Integrative Seminar II	2
Child & Family / Enter Candidacy & Start the Specialization		
SOCW 7050/8060*	One Elective (see electives information below)	3
SOCW 8100	Contexts and Theories in Practice	3
SOCW 8200	Practice with Families	3
SOCW 8500	Policy Practice with Children and Families	3
SOCW 8600	Field Practicum III	3
SOCW 8601	Field Integrative Seminar III	2
SOCW 8300	Advanced Practice with Children & Families	3
SOCW 8400	Practice Evaluation	3
SOCW 8700	Field Practicum IV	3
SOCW 8701	Field Integrative Seminar IV	2
	TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS	60
<p>*Electives vary by specialization</p> <p>Specialization: Child and Family with a Mental Health Subspecialty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCW 7050 DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) • SOCW 8060 Advanced Mental Health <p>Specialization: Child and Family with a Child Welfare License (CWEL) Subspecialty</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOCW 7050 Child Welfare I • SOCW 7050 Child Welfare II <p>Specialization: Child and Family without a Subspecialty (most flexible option)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two SOCW 7050/8060 Social Work Electives (must satisfy prerequisites) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Elective offerings vary by semester and may include DSM, Ethics, Entrepreneurship, Family Trauma, Child Welfare, Advanced Mental Health. 		

Advanced Standing Master of Social Work

The Advanced Standing MSW Program is comprised of 32 credit hours for students who have earned a Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program within seven years of the date of application. Students may complete their studies on a full-time or part-time basis:

- Full-time (1 year) - 2-3 semesters, 12-18 credit hours per semester.
- Part-time (2 years) – 4-6 semesters, 7-10 credit hours per semester.

Students complete field education at the advanced level. Requires a Fall and Spring term of field education, totaling two semesters of field education.

- 16-20 hours weekly at the advanced level based on practice specialization.

Master of Social Work Advanced Standing Curriculum Requirements by Specialization		
Specialization: School Social Work		
SOCW 8000	Writing for Social Work	1
SOCW 8100	Contexts and Theories in Practice	3
SOCW 8210	Practice in Schools	3
SOCW 8600	Field Practicum III	3
SOCW 8601	Field Integrative Seminar III	2
SPED 6101	Survey of Exceptional Students	3
SOCW 8060	Advanced Topic Elective	3
SOCW 8300	Advanced Practice with Children & Families	3
SOCW 8400	Practice Evaluation	3
SOCW 8510	Policy for School Social Workers	3
SOCW 8700	Field Practicum IV	2
	TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS	32
Specialization: Children and Family		
SOCW 8000	Writing for Social Work	1
SOCW 8100	Contexts and Theories in Practice	3
SOCW 8200	Practice with Families	3
SOCW 8500	Policy Practice with Children and Families	3
SOCW 8600	Field Practicum III	3
SOCW 8601	Field Integrative Seminar III	2
SOCW 7050/8060*	Two Electives (see electives information below)	6
SOCW 8300	Advanced Practice with Children & Families	3
SOCW 8400	Practice Evaluation	3
SOCW 8700	Field Practicum IV	3
SOCW 8701	Field Integrative Seminar IV	2
	TOTAL PROGRAM CREDITS	32

*Electives vary by specialization

Specialization: Children and Family with a Mental Health Subspecialty

- SOCW 7050 DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)
- SOCW 8060 Advanced Mental Health

Specialization: Children and Family with a Child Welfare License Subspecialty

- SOCW 7050 Child Welfare I
- SOCW 7050 Child Welfare II

Specialization: Children and Family without a Subspecialty (most flexible option)

- Two SOCW 7050/8060 Social Work Electives (must satisfy prerequisites)
 - Elective offerings vary by semester and may include DSM, Ethics, Entrepreneurship, Trauma, Child Welfare, Advanced Mental Health.

Post-MSW Professional Educator License Certificate Program

The Post-MSW Certificate is comprised of 19 credit hours for students who have earned a Master of Social Work (MSW) degree from a Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited program. The primary goal of our program is to prepare effective school social work practitioners grounded in a social justice ethos. The certificate program prepares to serve students with mental health and behavioral concerns at the individual and group level in primary and secondary school settings. The program has been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to prepare candidates for entitlement for school licensure (PEL). Candidates must pass the [ILTS content test](#) to become entitled for school social work licensure.

Post-Master of Social Work Professional Educator License Certificate School Social Work Curriculum Requirements		
SPED 6101	Survey of Exceptional Students	3
SOCW8210	Social Work Practice in Schools	3
SOCW 8510	Policy for School Social Workers	3
SOCW 8600	Field Practicum III	3
SOCW 8601	Field Practicum III	2
SOCW 8700	Field Practicum IV	3
SOCW 8701	Field Practicum IV	2

Field Education

Field work has been heralded as the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2008). The Field Education Office in the Department of Social work provides students with optimal learning experiences in the field. Through their field practicum, and the completion of Field Seminar and Field Practicum courses, students solidify their practice skills, learn to use supervision effectively, practice self- reflection, demonstrate professionalism, model the NASW Code of Ethics, promote social justice and develop their own professional identity. All policies and procedures related to Field Education can be found in the Field Education Manual.

Advising

All students are assigned a faculty advisor when they enter the MSW Program. Students must meet with their advisors at least once every academic year, although they are encouraged to meet as frequently as needed. A major purpose of advisement is to ensure that students have one-on-one time to discuss their progress and concerns and ask questions of someone who knows their study plans. Advisors also support students to stay on track and provide direction that takes into consideration individual circumstances. Additionally, advisors provide career guidance and mentoring. See Policy 101 for more information.

Section III: Policies

Student Responsibilities - 100

Policy 101 - Academic Advisement

Policy: Upon admission to the Master of Social work Program, each student is assigned an academic advisor.

The role of an academic advisor is described below:

- Work with the student to explain their individualized Plan of Study
- Advise students in their academic progress
- Function as a liaison between the student and the university
- Function as an advocate for the student
- Verify that the student is eligible for Candidacy
- Verify completion of all requirements for graduation

Purpose: To ensure that the student has every opportunity of a successful experience and has the information necessary to participate in the program and meet all program requirements.

Procedure:

1.0 A faculty advisor is assigned to each student when they are admitted to the program

2.0 Student Responsibilities

2.1 Students are expected to make an appointment with their advisor at least one time during each semester.

2.2 Students should plan to see their advisor during posted office hours or by appointment.

2.3 Students are encouraged to initiate meetings with their advisor at any time to discuss academic progress, problems, or concerns.

2.4 It is the student's responsibility to keep their advisor apprised of any information relevant to their academic progress in the program.

2.5 If a faculty member identifies academic and or non-academic problems the Advisor may recommend a staffing or more frequent advising sessions of plan of correction.

3.0 Faculty advisors may periodically initiate meeting with their advisees to discuss academic progress

3.1 All advisors have designated office hours each semester to facilitate ongoing communication with students.

3.2 All faculty members have mailboxes, email and voice mail to facilitate communication with advisees.

Policy 102 - Student Plan of Study

Policy: Each student must have an individual plan of study.

Purpose: The Plan of Study details the degree requirements and the course sequence.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Applicants who wish to have credit for previously earned MSW course work must adhere to GovState Policy #16 and Policy #30.
 - 1.1 Application for review of transfer credits must be made prior to the first term so as to be incorporated in the study plan.
 - 1.2 Credit for Life Experience is not accepted.
 - 1.3 Applicants must submit syllabi and supporting information to the MSW Admission Committee for a comparative review of course work.
- 2.0 The student will meet with their Academic Advisor prior to or during the first semester of enrollment.
- 3.0 The student and advisor will review the proposed Plan of Study.
- 4.0 The Plan of Study must be reviewed and updated whenever a student:
 - 4.1 Is unable to progress according to plan
 - 4.2 Wishes to substitute course work specified on the plan
 - 4.3 Must repeat a course
 - 4.4 Receives a grade of C+ or lower in a MSW Course
 - 4.5 Deviates from the Plan of Study
 - 4.6 Does not receive authorization for candidacy
 - 4.7 Is readmitted
- 5.0 Courses not specified in the Plan of Study will not apply toward the degree requirements.

Policy 103 - MSW Candidacy

Policy: Full Program MSW Students attain candidacy in the MSW Program when the student is in the last term of the generalist foundation curriculum and are progressing satisfactorily and have maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher. Advanced Standing MSW students attain candidacy during the fall term of their first year of enrollment when they enroll in SOCW 8000-Transition to Advanced Social Work.

Purpose: Application for candidacy ensures that each student has met all requirements necessary to move to Advanced Field Practicum.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students must meet with their Academic Advisor to determine that all requirements for candidacy are met.
- 2.0 Advisor will verify and authorize candidacy

Policy 104 - Graduation Application

Policy: GovState determines if you are eligible to receive your degree, you must apply to graduate using this online application. Submitting an application does not mean that you have graduated. A non-refundable, processing fee is required for each application. If you are receiving multiple degrees, an application is required for each degree. Students apply for graduation in the MyGSU portal: Online Services > Students > Academic Profile > Apply to Graduate.

Purpose: To ensure that all students completing the requirements for graduation comply with the University rules for graduation.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Prior to completing these forms student should have met with their advisor to review their Plan of Study and verify completion of degree requirements.
 - 1.1 Outstanding requirements must be completed by the term the student is expected to graduate.
- 2.0 When the Registrar's Office receives the applications, they are coded for billing.
 - 2.1 The forms are then sent to the faculty academic advisors to determine whether the student has completed their degree requirements.
 - 2.2 The advisor must notify the student if they are not eligible for graduation.
 - 2.3 The forms are then signed with the appropriate signatures and sent to the Graduation Counselors in the Registrar's Office.
- 3.0 Approval by the Registrar's Office results in the awarding of the diploma.
 - 3.1 The diploma is awarded only upon verification of completion of all degree requirements and satisfaction of all financial obligations in the University.

Student Status - 200

Policy 201 - MSW Admission Policy

Policy:

Admission to the MSW Program is a competitive and self-managed admission process; a limited number of applicants will be accepted in the MSW Program each year. Applicants must complete all steps in the applicant process to be considered for admission.

Purpose: A competitive admission process allows for the admission of students who meet the requirements for successful completion of the program and entry into the profession as Social Workers Grounded in a Social Justice Ethos.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Applicants must apply for the MSW program through the Online Graduate Admission Process which includes the following:
 - Completion of MSW application and essay questions,
 - Three written references/recommendations (must be professional or academic)
 - Official undergraduate transcripts
 - Graduate Admissions Application Fee
- 2.0 Applications will be assessed by the Admissions Committees based upon:
 - 2.1 Minimum cumulative undergraduate GPA requirements are as follows:
 - Full MSW Program – 2.5
 - Advanced Standing MSW Program – 3.0 in BSW courseworkNote: These GPA requirements are minimums. Admissions is a competitive process, and a minimum GPA does not guarantee admission.
 - 2.2 Quality of written essay and/or video responses (as applicable), specifically as the demonstrate:
 - 2.2.1 A commitment to the mission of the MSW program

- 2.2.2 A personal value system consistent with that of the social work profession
 - 2.2.3 Prior employment and/or volunteer experience serving the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups
 - 2.2.4 If applicable, the need for a part-time program due to the inability to leave employment to pursue professional education.
- 2.3 Appropriateness and quality of recommendation letters indicating applicants' readiness for graduate study.
- 3.0 Applications received after the published deadline will not be accepted.
- 4.0 After the designated deadline, applications will be reviewed. The Social Work Department will inform applicants of their status (complete or incomplete) by email through mswadmissions@govst.edu.
- 5.0 The Admission Committee will render decisions (admit, conditional admit, deny and waitlist)
- 6.0 Applicants will be informed of the decision by the MSW Program Coordinator
- 7.0 Students who are offered admission to the MSW program must respond and accept the offer via confirmation form to mswadmissions@govst.edu by the date specified.
- 8.0 Students placed on the waitlist will be offered admission in the ranked order based upon admission requirements.
- 9.0 Students accepted to the MSW Program may defer admission for one year. The student must notify the Program in writing before the fall semester begins using the Deferment Request Form, see the appendix of this handbook.
- 9.1 Students that defer admission must notify the Program in writing no less than two weeks prior to the semester in which they intend to begin coursework using the Intent to Enroll after Deferment form. Full-time students should also contact the Field Education Office one term prior to their start term to obtain field-education information.

Policy 211 – Admission to Post-MSW Certificate Program

Policy: A limited number of applicants will be accepted in the certificate program each year. Applicants must complete all steps in the applicant process to be considered for admission.

Purpose: Outlines the minimum requirements for admission to Post-MSW Certificate Programs.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Applicants must apply for the Post-MSW Certificate Program through the Online Graduate Admission Process
- 2.0 In order to be accepted into the Post-MSW Degree Program, the student must:
 - 2.1 Have earned a Master of Social Work degree from a CSWE accredited program
 - 2.2 Submitted an official transcript / proof of degree with their application.
 - 2.3 Have earned a GPA of at least 3.00/4.00 scale or better.

Policy 202 - Academic Progression

Policy: A student must successfully complete all courses listed in the Plan of Study

Purpose: Course progression is prescribed and sequential. A cumulative GPA of 3.0 is required to progress in the program.

Procedure:

1.0 Grades and specific guidelines for grading are specified on every course syllabus in the MSW Program. The grading policy for MSW courses is consistent with that of GovState and reflects the levels of performance shown below.

2.0 In accordance with University Policy #26, the MSW program will utilize the following grading scale:

Grade	%	Description	Grade Points per Credit Hour
A	93-100	Far exceeds expectations	4
A-	90-92	Exceeds expectations	3.7
B+	87-89	Exceeds most expectations, meets other expectations	3.3
B	83-86	Meets all expectations	3
B-	80-83	Meets most expectations, marginally meets others	2.7
C+	77-79	Marginally meets expectations, below other expectations	2.3
C	73-76	Marginally meets expectations	2
C-	70-72	Below expectations	1.7
D+	67-69	Below on most expectations, far below on others	1.3
D	63-66	Far below on many expectations	1
D-	60-62	Far below on all expectations	0.7
F	59 or lower	Failure to meet expectations	0
P		Pass	
NC		No credit	

3.0 Progression in the program is contingent upon maintaining good academic standing (a cumulative GPA of 3.0) to be eligible to register for field practicum, to apply for candidacy, and to graduate. For policy and procedures for GPA below 3.0 should consult University Policy #14.

4.0 To progress through the program, students are expected to earn a final grade of B- or higher in all required social work courses. If a student earns a final grade lower than B-, the student is required to participate in an academic review with the academic advisor and additional faculty or staff, as needed.

5.0 Students may not earn more than one grade in the C range (C-, C, C+) in a social work course. Earning a grade in the C range will require an academic staffing.

6.0 An additional grade in the C range in any social work course requires students to repeat the course. Any grade below a C- requires the student to repeat the course. If courses are repeated, a student's Plan of Study will need to be reviewed and academic staffing will be required. Progression to courses that are sequential will be impacted if courses are repeated.

7.0 Courses may only be repeated once. No more than three different required courses may be repeated. If a student receives financial aid or scholarships, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate university offices to discuss the financial implications of repeating a course.

8.0 A student may appeal for a final grade in accordance with University Grievance Policy #5.

9.0 A student may appeal a dismissal decision in accordance with University Grievance Policy #5 - <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=47481>.

Policy 203 - Non-Academic Performance

Policy: Non-academic performance is considered part of the student's overall academic performance. Assessment of non-academic performance begins at the time of admission. These criteria must be met in addition to academic criteria to progress in the program. Non-academic performance is defined as professional behavior, as outlined in Policy #401-Professional Behavior of this handbook. Assessment of professional behavior and response to infractions are described in Policy #403-Professional and Academic Violations of this handbook.

Purpose: Interpersonal skills, professional behavior and other non-academic skills are essential to the overall effectiveness of a competent social worker and required by the NASW Code of Ethics; therefore, these skills and behaviors are expected during student tenure.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Social Work faculty addresses these issues through regular Student Progress Review Meetings.
- 2.0 Potential problems are raised as soon as possible with the student.
- 3.0 Behavior that is in violation of professional behavior standards will be addressed following the procedures outlined in Policy #403.

Policy 204 – Leave of absence

Policy: In accordance with University Policy, a student may request emergency or medical leave if they have experienced serious illness, injury, hospitalization, military deployment, family medical issues or death.

Purpose: Outlines the circumstances under which and the process for requesting emergency or medical leave.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students should consult with their advisor if they are considering seeking an emergency or medical leave.
- 2.0 Students should follow the procedures outlined for requesting emergency or medical leave outlined by the Division of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management:
<https://www.govst.edu/EmergencyLeave/#:~:text=A%20student%20may%20request%20an,the%20student%20from%20continuing%20classes>.
- 3.0 Students that take a leave of absence must notify the Program in writing no later than two weeks prior to resuming their coursework using the Intent to Resume Studies form. Students should contact their academic advisor to review their revised Plan of Study. Full-time students should contact the Field Education office to obtain field education related information.

Policy 205 - Withdrawal from a course

Policy: The student may withdraw from a course only one time. Approval will not be given for a second withdrawal from the same course without unusual or emergency circumstances, which may entail sitting out the following semester due to course sequencing.

Purpose: Outlines the number of withdrawals permitted in the MSW Program and describes the potential impact of course withdrawal on academic progression.

Procedures:

- 1.0 The student must meet with their Academic Advisor prior to withdrawal from a course.
- 2.0 Withdrawal from a course must follow University Policy #6, Withdrawal - <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=41218>
- 3.0 The curriculum is sequential, withdrawal from a course may result in delay in completion of the program.
- 4.0 Withdrawal from a course will result in revision of the study plan and may add additional semesters to student progress.
 - 4.1 The revised Plan of Study will reflect the next scheduled opportunity to take the course.
 - 4.2 The revised Plan of Study will maintain the sequence of the curriculum and reflect any adjustment in length of time to complete.
 - 4.3 Request for withdrawal from a Field Practicum and the co-requisite Integrative Seminar (SOCW7500/7501; 7600/7601; SOCW8600/8601; SOCW8700/8701) is detailed in the Field Education Manual.

Policy 206 – Withdrawal from the MSW Program

Policy: A student may choose to withdraw from the MSW Program at any time of study.

Purpose: Outlines the process for withdrawing from the University and the MSW Program, as well as the financial and other responsibilities of the student.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students should consult with their advisor if they are considering seeking an emergency or medical leave.
- 2.0 Students should follow the process and understand their financial and other responsibilities associated with withdrawal as outlined by the University Academic Regulation, Withdrawal from the University: [Academic Regulations - Governors State University - Acalog ACMS™ \(govst.edu\)](https://www.govst.edu/academic-regulations-governors-state-university-acalog-acms).
- 3.0 Students are invited to complete an exit survey so that the Social Work Department can understand a student's decision to withdraw from the program and possible areas for improvement and retention.

Policy 207 - Reinstatement to the MSW Program

Policy: Students who withdraw from the program and wish to reenter at a later date are required to submit a letter requesting reinstatement to Governors State University Master of Social Work Program Chair. Reinstatement into the program will be on a space available basis only.

Purpose:

To ensure successful and timely completion of the MSW Program after withdrawal from the program

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students who wish to apply for reinstatement to the Master of Social Work Program must submit, to the Department Chair, a letter requesting reinstatement no later than 60 days prior to the next scheduled academic term.
- 2.0 Upon receipt of the student's letter, the MSW Program Coordinator, the Department Chair, and other faculty and/or advisor (as needed), will review the student's record to make a determination.
- 3.0 A letter from the Department Chair will be sent to the student regarding the decision for reinstatement.
- 4.0 Reinstatement to the program must be within twelve months of the withdrawal from the program.
 - 4.1 Withdrawals extending beyond 12 months will require the student to apply for admission to the program.

Policy 209 - Incomplete Grade Option

Policy: In accordance with University Policy #26, an Incomplete is a temporary grade that may be given at the instructor's discretion when illness, necessary absence, or other reasons beyond the control of the student prevent completion of course requirements and must be requested by the student.

An instructor may grant an incomplete to a student if, in the judgment of the instructor, the reasons for the non-completion of the coursework are acceptable (see University Policy #26). The time allowed for completing unfinished coursework will be determined by the instructor but will not exceed two weeks before the end of the subsequent term. In accordance with University Policy #26:

- Incomplete grades may be given only in the following circumstances: a) a documented illness or other extenuating circumstance prevents completion of required work by the due date; and b) with either one of the following criteria:
 - the student's work to date is passing,
 - attendance has been satisfactory prior to the extenuating circumstances.
- Incomplete status is not: a) to be given as a substitute for a failing grade, b) to be based solely on a student's failure to complete work or as a means of raising her or his grade by doing additional work after the grade report time, c) a substitute grade for students who have not attended the course.

Purpose: A grade of incomplete is given to students experiencing extenuating circumstances that prevent completion of required coursework by the required due date.

Procedure:

- 1.0 A student must make a written request to the course instructor for an incomplete. The request must include the reason for the extension.
- 2.0 An instructor may grant an incomplete to a student if, in the judgment of the instructor, the reasons for the non-completion of the coursework are acceptable.
- 3.0 The instructor will establish a deadline for completion of required coursework, not to exceed two weeks before the end of the subsequent term.
- 4.0 A student may petition the instructor in writing for an extension of time beyond the time allotted by the instructor for the completion of unfinished work
- 5.0 If work is not submitted by the deadline established for an incomplete (I) or an extended incomplete (E) the grade will become an "F",
- 6.0 To be eligible for graduation, all grades of incomplete (I or E) must be removed by the graduation processing date.

Policy 210 - Academic Standing

Policy: Graduate students who maintain a minimum cumulative G.P.A. of 3.0 are in academic good standing. Students must be in academic good standing to graduate.

Purpose: This policy defines the various classifications of academic standing for graduate students and information related to each status.

Procedure:

- 1.0 In accordance with University Policy #14, at Governors State University there are here are (4) categories of academic standing for students:
 - 1.1 Good Standing

- 1.2 Academic Probation
- 1.3 Academic Probation Extended
- 1.4 Academic Suspension
- 2.0 Graduate students are in good standing when they maintain a minimum cumulative grade-point average of 3.0 (on a 4.0 scale).
- 3.0 Students are no longer in Good Standing when they fail to meet the minimum cumulative grade point average. All status changes take effect the semester immediately following the semester in which the student fails to meet the established minimum.
- 4.0 Graduate students performing below a 3.0 cumulative GPA but at a 2.0 cumulative GPA or higher are placed on Academic Probation.
- 5.0 Graduate students performing below a 2.0 cumulative GPA are placed on Academic Probation Extended.
- 6.0 After enrolling for courses while on Academic Probation, if the student fails to achieve the minimum cumulative GPA, the student will be placed on Academic Probation Extended.
 - 6.1 Academic Probation Extended means that as long as a student obtains the minimum semester grade point average each semester and is making satisfactory progress towards degree completion, the student will not be suspended. The first semester a student is on Academic Probation Extended they are required to complete a learning contract with the Academic Resource Center. The contract and a report of the work done will be shared with the student's Academic Advisor to help ensure positive academic progress.
 - 6.2 After enrolling for courses while on Academic Probation Extended, if the student fails to achieve the minimum semester GPA, the student will be placed on Suspension for the next semester. Students may request readmission after being suspended by petitioning the Committee on Readmissions and Special Admissions (see policy 19G for additional information).
- 7.0 Students must be in good academic standing to advance to candidacy, as defined for graduate students in the Graduate Studies Policy (#16), and to graduate.

Class Requirements – 300

Policy 301 – Attendance

Policy: Students are expected to attend all sessions of every class.

Purpose: To ensure that students receive the maximum benefit from courses and professional courtesy is maintained.

Procedure:

- 1.0 If a student is going to be late for class, the following procedures are followed.
- 2.0 If the student knows in advance that they will be late for class, the student notifies the instructor before the class session.
 - 2.1 When a student arrives more than 15 minutes late for class the student should follow the instructor's protocol for late arrival.
- 3.0 If a student is going to be absent for a class, the following procedures are followed.
 - 3.1 If the student knows in advance that they will be able to attend class, the student notifies the instructor before the class session.
 - 3.2 If the student is absent because of an emergency, they notify the instructor of the reason for the absence as soon as possible.

3.3 The student is responsible for consulting the specific course syllabus for policies and procedures for absences and tardiness.

Policy 302 - Class Cancellation

Policy: Students are responsible for checking with the University regarding the status of classes during inclement weather.

Purpose: To inform student if a class is cancelled or the University is closed.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students are responsible for checking the GovState website, Blackboard, and/or their GovState email for any announcement of class cancellation.
 - 1.1 May be due to instructor illness or an emergency.
 - 1.2 University may be closed
- 2.0 Students should follow the Governors State University Procedures for Inclement Weather Conditions. www.govst.edu/emergency

Policy 303 - Communication

Policy:

Students are responsible for timely attention to information distributed by the Social Work Department by email and/or Blackboard associated with specific courses. The MSW Program may contact students by GovState student email accounts, voice mail or U.S. Mail.

Purpose: The policy is intended to ensure that students use University-sanctioned forms of communication.

Procedure:

- 1.0 All Governors State University students are assigned a university e-mail account. All email communication will be done through this account. Students are responsible for all information sent to them by the Program and faculty via university email.
 - 1.1 Students are responsible for checking email on a regular basis and maintaining availability of their mailbox.
 - 1.2 Students are considered notified of Program or class information once it is sent to the University email account.
- 2.0 Official notification of program status, i.e., probation status, termination from the Program will be sent to the student's address of record via U. S. Mail.

Policy 304 - Use of Electronic Devices

Policy: Electronic devices should only be used in classrooms and field settings to enhance learning. They are not to be used for video, camera, or voice recording unless it is an accepted part of the classwork and permission is granted. Students should consult syllabi for specific instructor policies.

Purpose: Describes the appropriate use of electronic devices.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students cannot use cellular phones for video, camera, or voice recordings without consent of the subject(s) being photographed or recorded.

1.1 Any student whose use of their cellular phone or other electronic device violates another's reasonable expectation of privacy or produces any media as a result of such devices without expressed consent may be found in violation of this policy.

1.2 Violation of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, as outlined in Policy #403 below.

2.0 Students are expected to turn off cellular phones when entering class and to refrain from text messaging or reading email.

Student Conduct – 400

Policy 401 - Professional behavior

Policy: Students are expected to demonstrate professional, responsible, and accountable behaviors throughout their classroom and field education.

As members of the GovState Community, students are responsible for upholding the mission and objectives of the university, as well as the mission and philosophy of the Social Work Department. As social work students, students are also responsible for demonstrating professional behavior in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education and the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics.

Students are required to meet the following criteria:

- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with clients served.
- Demonstrate professional demeanor including, but not limited to the ability to act independently, and ability to cooperate and collaborate with others, including faculty, field supervisors as well as other students, punctuality, dependability, interpersonal skills, regard for self and other, preparedness, ethical decision making, and personal and professional growth. Examples of such behaviors may include the ability to accept and respond appropriately to criticism, maintaining a professional appearance in terms of dress and grooming, maintaining confidentiality, etc.
- Demonstrate professional behavior as defined by the Council on Social Work Education, including:
 - Make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>) and other relevant laws and regulations
 - Demonstrate professional behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication, including using technology in an ethical and appropriate way
 - Use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior
The CSWE definition of competency in ethical and professional behavior can be found here: <https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-EPAS.pdf>

Purpose: To assure the promotion and maintenance of high standards of behavior in the social work profession in accordance with the Council on Social Work Education and National Association of Social Work Code of Ethics.

Procedure:

1.0 Behavior that is not in line with the expectations outlined above will be brought to the attention of the student.

2.0 Behavior that is in violation of professional behavior standards will be addressed following the procedures outlined in Policy #403.

Policy 402 - Academic Integrity

Policy: Students are expected to fulfill academic requirements in an ethical and honest manner. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, dishonesty in examinations (in-class or take-home), dishonesty in written assignments, work done for one course and submitted for another, deliberate falsification of data, interference with other students work, inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), and copyright violations.

Purpose: Describes academic integrity and the consequences for academic dishonesty. Students are expected to fulfill academic requirements in an ethical and honest manner.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Students should be familiar with and are expected to adhere to University Policy #14, Academic Honesty <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=15052>
- 2.0 Students should be familiar with and are expected to adhere to University Policy #62, Fair Use of Copyrighted Works for Education and Research <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=15090>
- 3.0 Students should be familiar with and are expected to adhere to the university policy on Artificial Intelligence.
 - 3.1 At Governors State University, we acknowledge the growing impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on education and strive to create a learning environment that promotes innovation, academic integrity, and responsible use of technology. All students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines regarding the use of AI in the classroom:
 - 3.1.1 Responsible AI use: While AI can be a valuable tool for learning, it is essential to use it responsibly and ethically. AI might be used to expand your understanding of course content, not as a substitute for your own work. All work submitted in this course must be your own, completed in accordance with the university's academic regulations.
 - 3.1.2 Academic Integrity: Using AI-generated content as your own work, including but not limited to essays, assignments, and exams, constitutes academic dishonesty. If you would like to use AI, please obtain prior permission from your instructor before using AI to complete an assignment. Any instances of academic dishonesty may be subject to disciplinary action.
- 4.0 Students should review course specific policies on plagiarism and academic dishonesty outlined in course syllabi.
- 5.0 Instances of academic dishonesty identified by an instructor is brought to the attention of the student.
- 6.0 Behavior that is in violation of professional behavior standards will be addressed following the procedures outlined in Policy #403 in this handbook.
 - 6.1 Other consequences deemed appropriate by University Policy #4 – Student Conduct, <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=44763> may also be imposed.

Policy 403 – Professional and Academic violations

Policy: Students who fail to demonstrate behaviors consistent with the professional practice of social work as described in the NASW Code of Ethics, violate student policies and procedures, or fail to

maintain a GPA that meets program standards may face dismissal or may require remediation or other consequences.

Purpose: This policy defines the circumstances and process for remediating violations and, if necessary, dismissal from the program. This policy does not pertain to conduct, disruptions and disciplinary action in the field placement – refer to the Field Education Manual.

Procedure:

- 1.0 Instructor, faculty, or staff member identifies violations of the professional and academic standards, including those outlined in Policies # 401 and #402 and brings the violation to the attention of the student. Note: Policies related to conduct and disruptions and disciplinary action in the field placement are outlined in the Field Education Manual.
 - 1.1 At the discretion of the instructor, faculty member, or staff member an opportunity for informal resolution may be offered (e.g., make-up or additional assignments, revision and resubmission of assignments, conducting additional research or training).
- 2.0 If deemed necessary, an academic staffing is held with the student, advisor, MSW Program Coordinator, faculty or instructors (if applicable) to discuss the violation or failure to meet academic or professional standards.
 - 2.1 An academic staffing provides the opportunity for the student to explain the circumstances of the violation.
- 3.0 If appropriate, a remediation plan is developed with the student, advisor, MSW Program Coordinator, faculty or instructors, and field liaison (if applicable).
 - 3.1 A remediation plan outlines specific actions, benchmarks, and deadlines for the student to remediate the violation.
- 4.0 Students who do not meet the academic and behavioral expectations of the program may be dismissed from the program at any time.
- 5.0 Students dismissed from the program will not be considered for readmission.
- 6.0 Students shall be given an opportunity to present their position regarding a dismissal if they wish to do so per the MSW Program Student Grievances Policy #403 and University Grievance Policy #5.

Policy 404 - Student Complaints

Policy: Student complaints are submitted and resolved according to Departmental procedures.

Purpose: To ensure that each student has a fair hearing to all complaints and that complaints are addressed in a timely, efficient manner.

Procedure:

- 1.0 A student with a complaint submits the complaint verbally to the appropriate individual.
 - 1.1 Complaints regarding the Master of Social Work Program are submitted to the MSW Program Coordinator.
 - 1.1.1 Complaints of this nature include the student's belief that a policy, procedure, or practice has been violated, which adversely affects them.
 - 1.2 Complaints regarding a grade in a course are submitted in writing to the instructor of the course.
- 2.0 Complaints are documented by the receiver, and a written response is returned to the student within three working days.
 - 2.1 A copy of the written response is forwarded to the MSW Program Coordinator and maintained in the departmental file.

- 3.0 If the student is dissatisfied with the initial response, they can submit a complaint to the MSW Program
 - 3.1 The complaint is documented by the MSW Program Coordinator
 - 3.2 The initial response is reviewed.
 - 3.3 A written response from the MSW Program Coordinator is forwarded to the student within three working days.
- 4.0 If the student remains dissatisfied with the response, they may submit a formal grievance (refer to MSW Program Policy #405).

Policy 405 - Student Grievances

Policy: Student grievances are submitted and resolved according to Departmental procedures.

Purpose: To ensure that each student has a fair hearing to all grievances and that grievances are addressed in a timely, efficient manner.

Procedure:

- 1.0 If the student is dissatisfied with the Social Work Department resolution of their complaint a grievance may be submitted following the University Grievance Policy #5 - <https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=47481>.

Field Education – 500

Field work has been heralded as the signature pedagogy of social work education (CSWE, 2008). The Field Education Office in the Department of Social work provides students with optimal learning experiences in the field. Through their field practicum, and the completion of Field Seminar and Field Practicum courses, students solidify their practice skills, learn to use supervision effectively, practice self- reflection, demonstrate professionalism, model the NASW Code of Ethics, promote social justice and develop their own professional identity. All policies and procedures related to Field Education can be found in the Field Education Manual: [Social Work Field Education | Governors State University \(govst.edu\)](https://www.govst.edu/workarea/DownloadAsset.aspx?id=47481).

Section IV: Resources

Student Support Services

Counseling and Wellness Center

Governors State University Counseling & Wellness Center (CWC), in partnership with Advocate Health Care, provides comprehensive medical, mental health, and case management services. The CWC's mission is to help improve GovState students' mental health, academic experiences, and overall well-being through facilitating personal, emotional, and social growth so that they can achieve their goals and aspirations. In order to aid and empower students to address their personal challenges, CWC programs include both individual and group counseling, couples counseling, and mental health crisis services—with a focus on wellness and prevention, services also include consultation, outreach, training, and educational services to students.

Office location: A-1120

Phone: 708.235.2114

Website: https://www.govst.edu/Campus_Life/Counseling_and_Wellness_Center/

GSU4U

GSU4U is an initiative to strengthen support for student success. GSU4U connects students facing personal difficulties, such as food and housing insecurity, to campus and community resources. We are dedicated to assisting all students, no matter how serious or small the situation may seem. GSU4U is available to:

- Assist students to navigate campus resources to strengthen their academic journey
- Connect students to community resources that assist with housing, food, clothing and financial support
- Assist students with applications for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food purchasing benefits, as well as assist with operations for the GovState Food Pantry
- Assist students with applications for CCAMPIS federal grant funds to provide free or discounted childcare at GovState Child Development Center
- Facilitate workshops that raise awareness about basic needs insecurities and the impact on student success
- Provide GSU4U personal hygiene care bags
- Provide school supplies to incoming freshman and students as needed

Office location: A-2124

Phone: 708.534.4083

Email: GSU4U@govst.edu

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/gsu4u/>

Access Services for Students with Disabilities

The role of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (ASSD) is to assist in providing an accessible environment and equality of educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities. The goal is to focus on a student's ability not the disability.

Office location: B-1215

Phone: 708.235.3968

Email: ASSD@govst.edu

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/disability-services/>

Center for Student Engagement and Intercultural Programs

The Center for Student Engagement and Intercultural Programs (CSEIP) is where involvement and learning intersect. The Center affords students the opportunity to participate in social activities, fulfill their civic duty, all while serving as a member of the GovState community. CSEIP promotes a sense of belonging and connectedness through campus programming, leadership development, intercultural education and service learning to enhance the collegiate experience of all GovState students.

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/CSEIP/>

Office of Financial Aid

The goal of the Office of Financial Aid is to assist you and your family to help create a comprehensive aid award that fits your family's unique circumstances by securing the resources necessary to fund your education. The Financial Aid Office is available year-round and committed to helping you navigate the financial aid process.

Phone: 708.534.4480

Email: faid@govst.edu

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/financial-aid/>

Undocumented Student Resources

Governors State University values the diversity of our students. We strive to provide an equitable learning experience where all students can thrive. Financial and community resources for undocumented students can be found at <https://www.govst.edu/undocumented-students/>.

Veterans Resource Center

Our predominantly military-connected staff is here to help you navigate VA Education Benefits, to offer career planning assistance, and to immerse you in campus life, including cultural events and sports. GovState is also a participating school with Air Force ROTC, and our staff represents military-connected student interests on many regional, statewide, and national associations and boards.

Location:

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/veterans/>

Academic Support Services

Academic Resource Center

The Academic Resource Center (ARC) provides a variety of academic support services and work closely with students, faculty, and staff, offering writing assistance, subject tutoring, academic recovery plans, disabilities services, and other resources.

Location: B1215, Student Success Commons

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/ARC>

Library

Location: D building, 2nd floor

Website: <https://www.govst.edu/gsu-library/>

Writing Center

The Writing Center provides students the resources necessary to become confident, effective writers and self-directed learners. We accomplish this task through encounters with students that focus on organization, content development, argumentation, proper formatting, and citation in their written work. The Writing Center helps students at every stage of the writing process and encourages them to view writing as a craft they must master through revision, reading, and perspective. Ultimately, our goal is to help students use writing as a skill that can inspire their lifelong learning, career advancement, personal fulfillment, and civic engagement.

Office location: B-1215

Phone: 708.534.4090

Website: https://www.govst.edu/Academics/Services_and_Resources/Writing_Center/