**Attendance Policy Values Statement**

The Social Work Department at MSU Denver adheres to the Council on Social Work Education’s (CSWE) Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. In abiding by the standards of the national governing body, CSWE, the Social Work Department at MSU Denver provides students and the surrounding communities a measure of confidence regarding competent, well-prepared professional social workers at the undergraduate level.

In addition to presentation of course content such as concepts and theories, social work education provides socialization into the profession—the development of an identity as a social work professional. Therefore, classroom sessions meet several learning objectives through the use of lecture, text review, guest speakers, interactive exercises, and student discussion. In order to ensure optimal development of professional identity, classroom attendance is vital. There is no substitute for transactions in the classroom among peers. Discussion includes the negotiation and consensus of terms (i.e., the language of the profession), values, provision of new insights and interpretations, and enhancement of both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Most importantly, students learn from colleagues; absenteeism creates the void of missing voices.

While there are other opportunities for socialization into the profession (Student Association of Social Workers membership and involvement, participation in the department list serve, faculty advising), the most consistent occasion resides in the interaction among students in the classroom with the instructor serving as facilitator.

Consequently, the Department of Social Work at MSU Denver presents the following attendance policy.
Social Work Program Attendance Policy

Absences:
In each social work class in which a student is enrolled, the student may miss, as unexcused absences, only as many class sessions per semester as the number of times the class meets in a week. Any additional absences will lower the student’s grade by 10% (one letter grade) for each week’s worth of unexcused absence. Absences from Field Seminar will effect seminar portion of the grade. Classes that meet once every two weeks will be considered as meeting once a week, for the purposes of this policy.

If more than 25% of the class is missed for any reason, the student must present his/her situation to the Social Work Attendance Committee for permission to continue. The purpose of the Attendance Committee is to review the individual situation and determine whether the student should continue in the program at this time, or may require time off to resolve the issue and refocus on their education. If the Attendance Committee does not give permission to continue, the student must take an incomplete or fail the class, regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused. In the event that a social work course has been take twice, resulting in a grade lower than a ‘C’ as a result of poor attendance, the student will NOT be allowed to take the class again for a period of one year. The student will be advised of the Committee’s decision, and of any corrective action plan, by the student coordinator.

Students may miss no more than 25% of any class, whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

Documentation of excused absences is required. The student is responsible for getting documentation to the professor within one week of the absence. Weather concerns: if class is held and you are not present, you will be counted absent. Your personal safety is your responsibility; there may be times you choose not to come.

Excused Absences:
Religious Holidays
Jury Duty
Death in Family
Field Placement-only for court appearances or in cases of emergency if requested by the Field Instructor.
Personal illness/injury
Emergency-with instructor agreement
Seriously sick child/family member- students are asked to have a back up plan for sick children so that they do not have to miss class.
Car breakdown- only if it happens on the way to class. If your car is in the shop please make other arrangements to get to class.
Professional Conference, or giving a presentation-with instructor approval only
Special request- such as other class field trip, life cycle event or special meetings during class time- with instructor approval only
**Tardies and Departing Class Early:**
A student is considered to be tardy, or to have an early departure form class, when s/he is five to fifteen minutes late to class, or leaves early, depending on the length of the class period (five minute for a 1 hour class, 10 minute for a 2 hour class and 15 minutes for a longer class). The accumulation of three tardies or the equivalent amount of time as an early departure equals one absence. Every tardy, or early departure, beyond the third will be counted as an additional absence unless the professor has prior knowledge of it and excuses it. The professor will consider special circumstances within one week of the tardy or early departure. It is the student’s responsibility to bring any special circumstances to the attention of the instructor.

**Forms of Early Documentation for Excused Absences, Tardies or Early Departures:**
Acceptable forms of documentation will be left up to the discretion of the professor and/or the attendance committee. Professors are encouraged to address their interpretation of “acceptable” forms of documentation at the time the syllabus is passed out.

**Attendance Appeal Committee**
This committee is comprised of the Program Director, student, Advisor, Faculty or Lead Faculty and one other social work faculty member who does not currently have the student in class. The committee will actively seek recommendations for action from all faculty involved in the student’s current situation. The goal of the attendance committee is to review the student’s appeal document and determine if an exception to the 25% attendance policy should be made.

The procedures for an attendance appeal are as follows:

1. The student must initiate a formal appeal in writing within one week of reaching the 25% threshold. This formal letter must include the student’s name, course code and name, and a clear statement as to the basis of the appeal. The student must clearly and individually list the dates of the absence and the reasons for the absence. The student must clearly state why an exception should be made to the attendance policy for this particular circumstance. The letter must be delivered to the instructor and a copy given to the Program Director.

2. The Program Director will convene a meeting of the attendance committee at the earliest possible date based on the schedules of the involved parties. The committee will make one of two determinations:
   a. The appeal is denied and the attendance policy will be enforced as stated. The student will receive written notification, by the Program Director, to include a justification of the decisions within one week of the committee meeting.
   b. The appeal is granted and the committee will develop an intervention plan for the student’s current attendance situation. The intervention plan will be given to the student in written form, by the Program Director, within one
week of the committee meeting. Failing to comply with the intervention plan will result in disciplinary action that may include termination from the program.

Responsibilities:

Instructors are responsible for taking attendance. An attendance sheet that requires a student’s signature may be circulated at the beginning of every class session. It is the responsibility of the student to sign the attendance sheet each time the class meets. If a student is tardy, the instructor will put a $T$ next to the student’s signature. In Field Seminar, attendance will be tracked in the students file.

When taking online and hybrid classes, it is the students’ responsibility to ensure their computer is compatible with MSU Denver’s current online operating system.

Non-Social Work Majors:
The policy applies equally to all students. A copy of the attendance policy is located on our website:

http://www.msudenver.edu/socialwork/