# OPEN LAB
## Upholding Academic Policy: Developing Systems and Procedures for Graduate Programs

Metropolitan State University of Denver

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March 9, 2021

**Grad Lab**
Office of Social Work Student Services, Finance & Administration
Department of Social Work
College of Health & Applied Sciences

# Introductions

Meet the presenters

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# Goals for this session

- Explore University and MSW Program academic policies and explore the purpose and meaning behind each one.

- Examine MSW Program systems and procedures designed to uphold these policies and track students.

- Explore student centered strategies designed to inform and support students.

# Setting the Stage

- Focus on academic policy for matriculated students (not admissions policy, transfer policy, etc)

- Overview of how the Open Lab content is organized.

# Changes on the horizon

- But, it's good to understand where we are now.

- Catalog and OGS Policy Handbook going through approval steps.

# University Policies

- Apply to us all.

- Are found in the Catalog.

- Set the "basement" floor expectations.

**Let's tour them!**

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# Computing Grade Point Average/Quality Points

The number of quality points awarded for a course is determined by multiplying the number of semester hours for that course by the quality point value of the grade received. The cumulative GPA is calculated by dividing the total number of quality points by the number of semester hours attempted.

To be eligible for a degree, a candidate must have a minimum number of quality points equal to three times the number of semester hours attempted in addition to meeting other prescribed requirements. The following notations have no effect on the GPA: AW, CC, I, NR, P, S, U.

# Course Credit (Semester Hours)

Course credit is based on units designated as semester hours. One semester hour, or one base contact hour, equals a minimum of 750 minutes; this equation translates to a minimum of 15, 50-minute class hours per semester. Time required for class preparation is not a consideration in the calculation of course credit. A three semester hour course will require six to nine hours of work outside of class each week. Courses involving laboratory work give one semester hour of credit for each two, three or four hours of scheduled work in the laboratory during a week, depending on the course. Internships require a minimum of 2,250 minutes for each hour of credit.

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# Course Load

Students may enroll in no more than 15 credits per semester for fall and spring semesters without department approval. The maximum load for a two-week Winterim or Maymester term is 3 semester hours, excluding short-term study abroad courses.

**Grad Program Flag!**
You'll need to have a process for when students want to take more than 15 credits. There is no Grad form (as of now).
**Grad Lab Opportunity?** create a CHAS process?
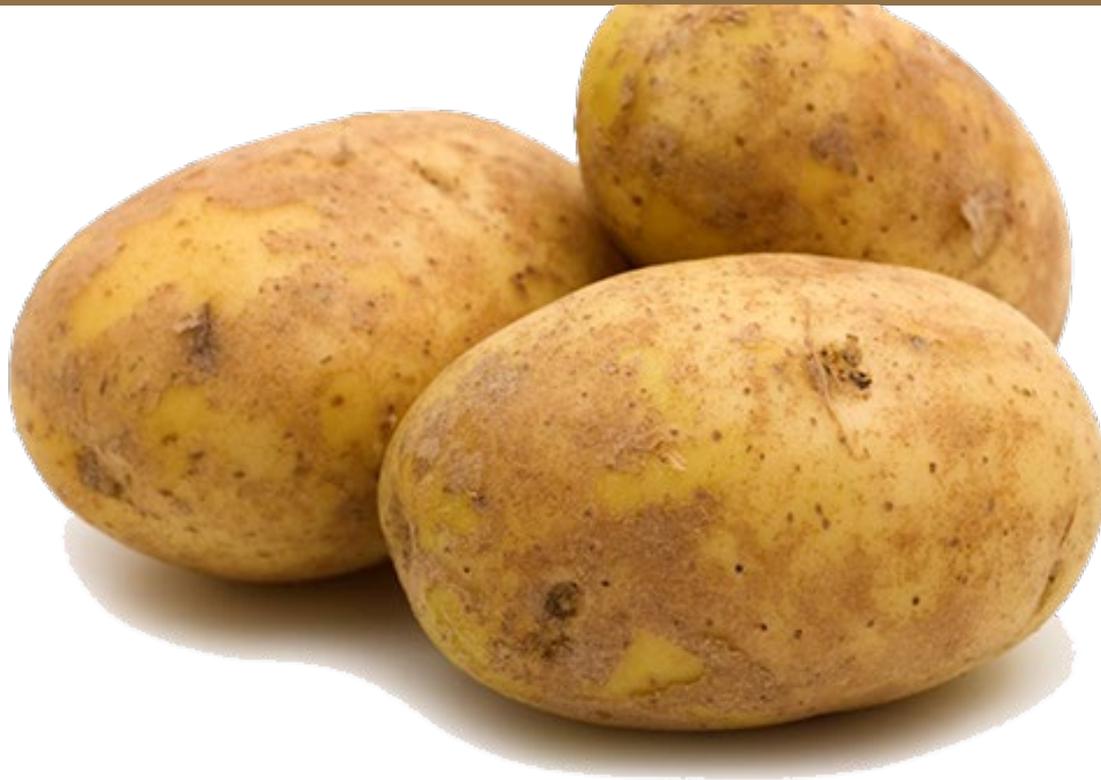
# Why do potatoes make good detectives?

Because they keep their eyes peeled!

# Duplicative Coursework

No course may count toward both the master's degree and the bachelor's degree.

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# GPA Requirements

- Program Specific

**Grad Program Flag!**

You'll need a policy. Consider appeal process(or not).

Reminder: New Grad Catalog requires a 3.0 at graduation. Consider a programmatic policy that ensures students are not set up for failure. (we'll share our process in the second half).

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# Grades and Notations

Faculty must assign a grade or notation for each student enrolled in a particular course. Faculty may, at their discretion, use the plus/minus system but are not required to do so. Faculty are required to notify students of the grading system used for an individual course via the course syllabus.

Certain grades and notations may impact a student's financial aid or other benefits. Students who request a grade or notation that impacts their financial aid or benefits are encouraged to speak with a counselor in the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships or the benefits provider prior to submitting the request.

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# Grades

Alphabetical grades and status symbols are as follows:

| A+ | 4.00 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| A | 4.00 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| A- | 3.67 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| B+ | 3.33 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| B | 3.00 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| B- | 2.67 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| C+ | 2.33 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| C | 2.00 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| C- | 1.67 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| D+ | 1.33 quality points per semester hour attempted |
| D | 1.00 quality point per semester hour attempted |
| D- | 0.67 quality point per semester hour attempted |
| F | 0 quality points per semester hour attempted |

**Grad Program Flag!**
Consider a policy to use or not use +/- grading. Also consider if your program uses A+ (MSW does not allow A+)

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# Notations

AW: **Administrative Withdrawal**

CC: **Continuing Correspondence**

I: **Incomplete**

NR: **Not Reported**

P: **Pass**

S: **Satisfactory**

SE: **Satisfactory – Education**

U: **Unsatisfactory**

UE: **Unsatisfactory - Education**

W: **Withdrawal**

**Grad Program Flag!**
Notations are considered an attempt. Be aware of this in your policy language.

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# When I think about policy….



This is fine.

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# AW - Administrative Withdrawal

POLICY

The Administrative Withdrawal (AW) notation is assigned when a student, or representative, requests to be withdrawn from a course due to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control. When the "AW" notation is assigned, no academic credit is awarded. The course remains on the student's academic record with an "AW" notation and counts toward the student's attempted hours. The course is not calculated in the student's GPA.

Students may request an administrative withdrawal from the **Office of the Registrar** after the withdrawal deadline posted in the **Academic Calendar**. Deadlines differ proportionally for courses offered during part of a semester, including late-start and weekend courses. Students should refer to the **Part-of-term dates** published by the Office of the Registrar to review drop deadlines for individual courses.

Although requests are evaluated on a case-by-case basis, examples include the death of an immediate family member, serious illness or medical emergency, or other life-altering event. The student must provide supporting documentation to substantiate the request.

**Grad Program Flag!**
Partnership with Registrar – this is different at the grad level!
Students or CARE team can submit requests.

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# I - Incomplete

• We all know what this is.

**Grad Program Flag!**
Consider your program process around the university one. Does everyone who needs to know, know? Do you have a plan to make sure these are resolved in time?

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# W - Withdrawal

The Withdrawal (W) notation is assigned when a student officially withdraws from a course via the **Student Hub** after the drop deadline (census date) and before the withdrawal deadline posted in the **Academic Calendar**. Deadlines differ proportionally for courses offered during part of a semester, including late-start and weekend courses. Students should refer to the Student Detail Schedule via the **Student Hub** to review drop and withdrawal deadlines for individual courses. When a student withdraws from a course, no academic credit is awarded. The course remains on the student's academic record with a "W" notation and counts toward the student's attempted hours. The course is not calculated in the student's GPA or quality points. After the withdrawal deadline, students may not withdraw from a course and will be assigned the grade earned based on the course syllabus.

**Grad Program Flag!**

How will you catch these? Really important for advising. What do you want your process to be when students withdrawal?

Academic Standing!!! – what is your semester by semester plan to check students' academic standing? How can this be efficient?

# Grade Appeals

POLICY

- We know what these are!

**Grad Program Flag!**
Consider your program's process and record keeping. Who needs to be alerted? Are there any program specific steps (the informal process) students should follow first before an official appeal?

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# Grade Changes

Grade changes must be submitted within the first seven weeks of the semester following the completion of the class. Spring semester grades can be through the seventh week of the following fall semester. All grades can be changed online using the Faculty and Staff Hub portal.

The faculty member may change an Incomplete (I) notation at any time within three consecutive semesters (including summer semester) after the end of the semester in which the class was attempted. At the end of the third consecutive semester (one calendar year), if the incomplete grade remains on the academic record, it will become an "F".

Grades may NOT be changed on the basis of revised standards of evaluation, new examinations, or additional work undertaken or completed after grades are submitted to the Office of the Registrar. Grades may only be changed on the basis of an error in evaluation, computation, or transcription.

**Grad Program Flag!**
Who needs to know? If this is done in Banner Workflow between the instructor and the Chair, the Program Director and advisors will not know unless you develop a system.

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# Readmission

Students who have not been in attendance for three consecutive semesters, including summer, must reapply to the University. Students requesting readmission **must be in good academic standing** and must submit their application for readmission to the master's program in which they have been enrolled.

**Grad Program Flag!**
This is a fast track process for student in good academic standing. What will you do for those that are not in good standing? We have students fully reapply to our program.

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When I think about policy....

# Residency Requirement

The University residency requirement for master's programs is the total number of semester hours required for the program minus 9.

**Grad Program Flag!**
This is the transfer policy backwards. If you advocated to transfer in more than 9 credits, be careful because this policy exists.
Example:
60 credit program – 9 = 51 credits required at MSU Denver

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# Time Limit on Completion of Degree

Master of Arts in Teaching, Master of Social Work, and 4+1 MPAcc students must complete the master's degree within six calendar years from the term they initially enroll. 3+2 MPAcc students must complete both degree requirements within 7 calendar years of being accepted to the MPAcc program. Students should check the program website and/or specific program section of the catalog to determine specific degree requirements.

**Grad Program Flag!**
This is program specific. Make certain you have one! Consider a request form to extend this (appeal). Who reviews, what would you approve, etc.

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# Tuition & Fees Appeals

- This is different at the graduate level.
- Mike McCabe, Bursar's Office
- Program process for reviewing and making decision is needed. Make sure Mike knows who the contact is (these come on year-round).
- This will impact your revenue, so be sure to account for this in the budgeting process.

# Suggestions for Effective Policy Development

- Audit Process

- Lay all your policies out – how do they connect. Do they work together, or not?

- Brainstorm all possible pathways a student could take – do you need a policy to help keep students within the boundaries?

- Faculty

- Program Director, Chair

- Staff

- Students

- Consider accreditation requirements, licensure, etc.

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# Program Academic Policies

- Purpose: Set the expectations of your unique program and any accreditation requirements.

- Reminder – we are focusing on academic policy. Behavior for another time….

- Explore MSW Program – why we have what we have.

# Credit for Life Experience

No credit is given for learning gained through life experience, and no life experience credit may be used toward the MSW degree.

# Change of Program Criteria Policy

At the time of admission to the Master of Social Work Program, the student will receive a comprehensive acceptance summary that includes the following criteria: acceptance status (regular or with requirements), program (Regular/Advanced Standing), course delivery method (fully online/mixed traditional), and enrollment status (full-time/part-time). Students will also receive a link to the relevant advising snapshots that outlines a clear path to graduation. Students have an opportunity to request a change of any of the criteria at the Confirmation of Enrollment stage. After that, students may request changes via the **Request for Change of Academic Plan form.** Students may obtain the Change of Academic Plan form on the MSW Program website.

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# **Testing Out Policy**

The Master of Social Work program does not provide an option to test out of any social work coursework at the graduate or undergraduate level.
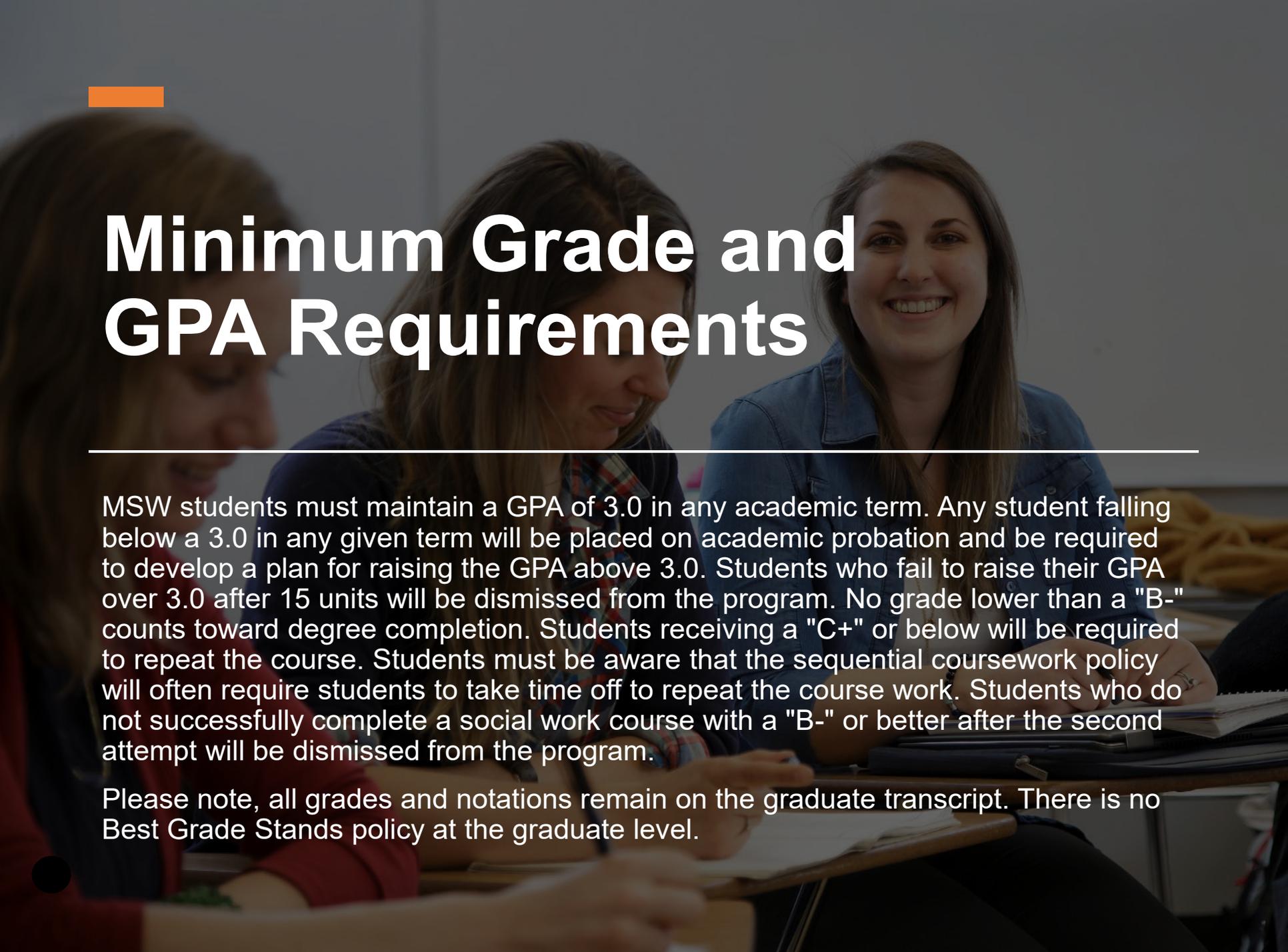
# Minimum Grade and GPA Requirements

MSW students must maintain a GPA of 3.0 in any academic term. Any student falling below a 3.0 in any given term will be placed on academic probation and be required to develop a plan for raising the GPA above 3.0. Students who fail to raise their GPA over 3.0 after 15 units will be dismissed from the program. No grade lower than a "B-" counts toward degree completion. Students receiving a "C+" or below will be required to repeat the course. Students must be aware that the sequential coursework policy will often require students to take time off to repeat the course work. Students who do not successfully complete a social work course with a "B-" or better after the second attempt will be dismissed from the program.

Please note, all grades and notations remain on the graduate transcript. There is no Best Grade Stands policy at the graduate level.
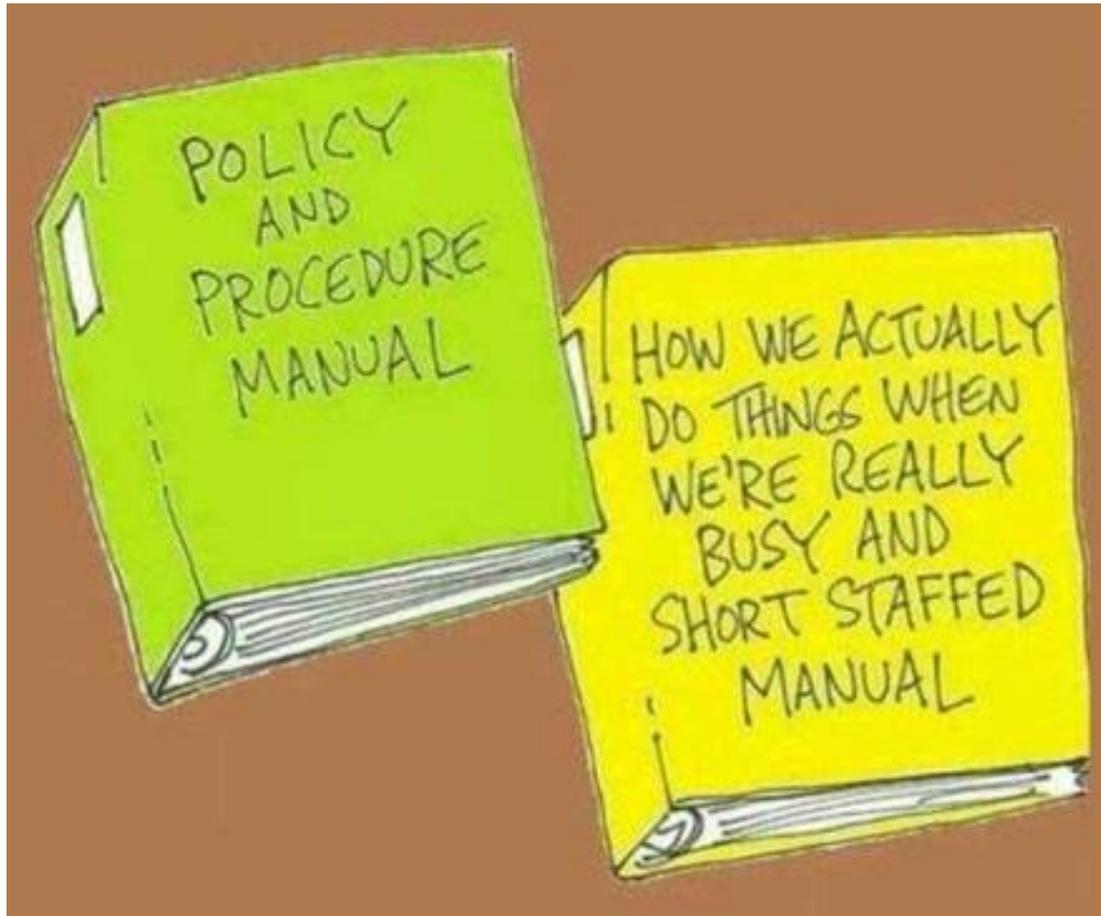
Does this feel true??

# Graduate Course Registration Eligibility

Only students who are formally accepted into the MSW Program or non-degree-seeking status may register for any graduate-level social work course.

# Sequential Coursework Policy

All MSW coursework, including electives, must be completed and passed in the required sequential order as listed in the Advising Snapshots/Plan of Completion and student must maintain continuous enrollment. Students who fall out of sequence are **no longer in good academic standing** and must seek advising immediately with the Office of Social Work Student Services to continue in the program. A plan of completion will be determined in advising and the revised plan could delay graduation by a year or more. Students who fall out of sequence and do not seek advising for a new plan of completion will receive an automatic performance review.

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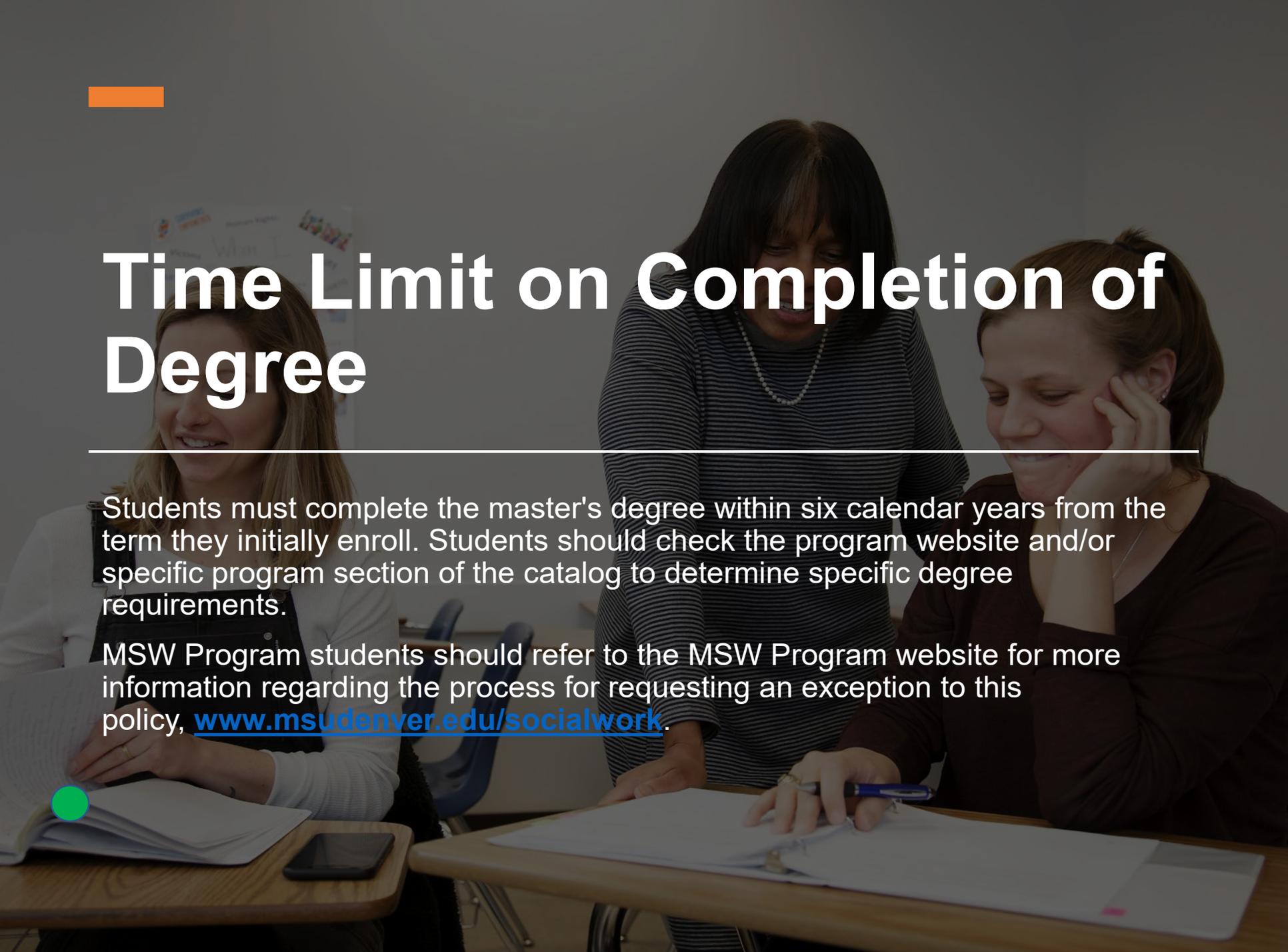
# Time Limit on Completion of Degree

Students must complete the master's degree within six calendar years from the term they initially enroll. Students should check the program website and/or specific program section of the catalog to determine specific degree requirements.

MSW Program students should refer to the MSW Program website for more information regarding the process for requesting an exception to this policy, **www.msudenver.edu/socialwork**.

# Readmission Policy

Students who have not been in attendance for three consecutive semesters, including summer, must reapply to the University. Students requesting readmission **must be in good academic standing** and must submit their application for readmission to the master's program in which they have been enrolled.

MSW Program students who are eligible for readmission should submit the following materials to the Office of Social Work Student Services:

- Readmission After Leave of Absence Form (located on the MSW Program website).

- The MSU Denver general graduate application and fee

Students who readmit into the MSW Program will be held to the policies and curriculum of the later term in which they officially restart the MSW Program. An approved readmit application is valid for one academic year from the readmit semester.

Students who are not in good academic standing are not eligible for the readmit application process and must fully apply to the MSW Program.

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# Keeping policies separate from procedures

- Keep an eye out for the difference.

- Ensure procedure is (mostly) on documents that can change outside of the catalog revision process. Sometimes it makes sense for a procedure to be in a Catalog.

**Policy Documents/Locations**

MSU Denver Graduate Catalog (includes university and program policies)

Graduate Program Handbook (policy and procedure)

Graduate Program Website (policy and procedure)

Other places that make sense for your Program

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# All About Academic Standing

| We need to develop a system to know if students are in… | How is it defined? Linked to which policies? | How will you track? | What action will you take, if any? (contact student, report, Banner, etc) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Good Standing | | | |
| Warning Zone | | | |
| Poor Standing | | | |

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Policies

Problem Resolution Procedures (Administrative Level IV Performance Reviews)

Procedures

Student Tracking

Reaching out to Student, Advising, Reporting, APR, Dismissals

**Student centered strategies for communication policy standards to students**

- How will you ensure students understand what's required of them?

- Fall Assembly or Orientation

- Dedicated newly admitted student pages (hidden

- Meetings with advisors

- Warning zone! Alerts when students are getting close (faculty advisors cc'd)

- Supporting and reinforcing other policies (Registrar, Financial Aid, etc.)
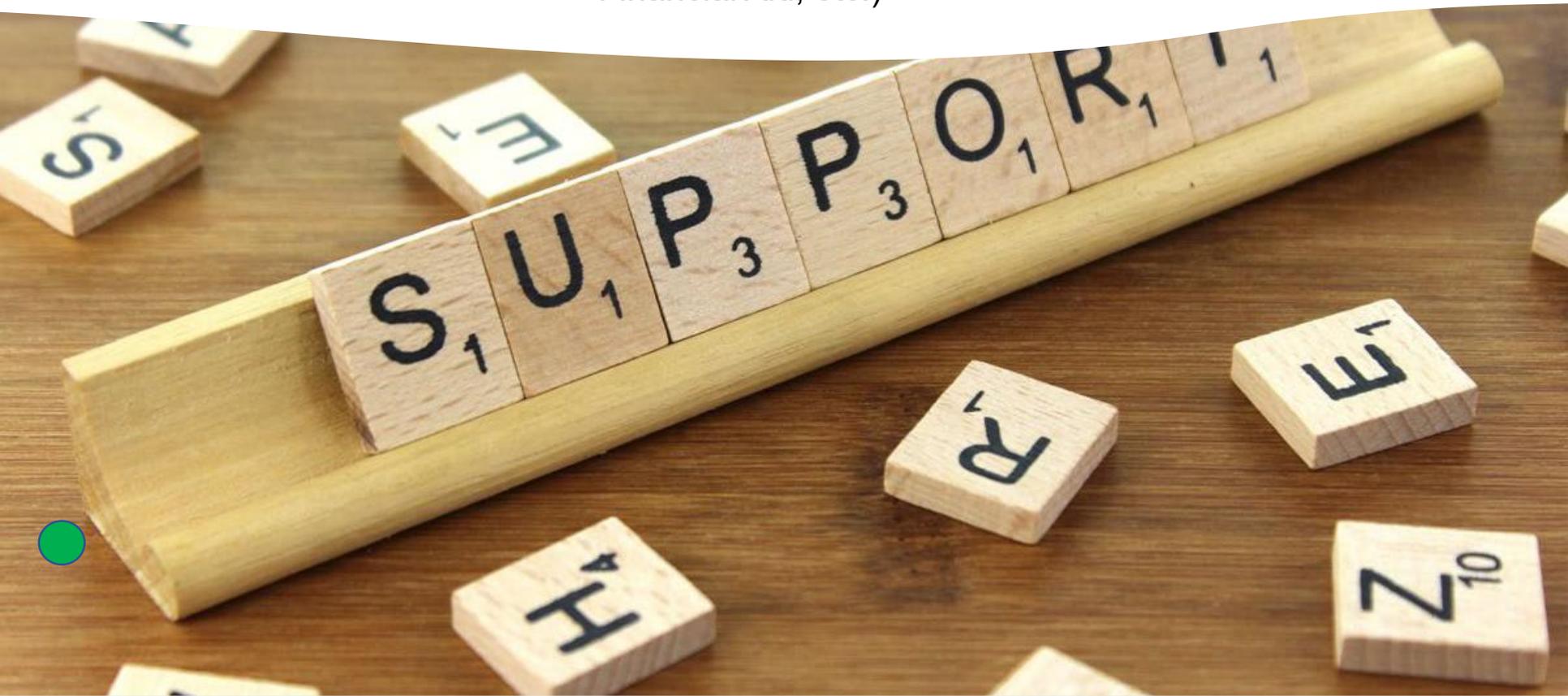
# Student Tracking

- Student spreadsheet (DPR and Excel Spreadsheet)

- Academic Performance Review/DPR process
  - GPA calculator (setting up systems to avoid big problems at graduation)

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# Reporting & Dismissals

- Consider summary reports that may be needed each semester/year to keep the team informed and identify issues.

- Dismissal Process – is this helpful for all of CHAS? We can present to Grad Collab.
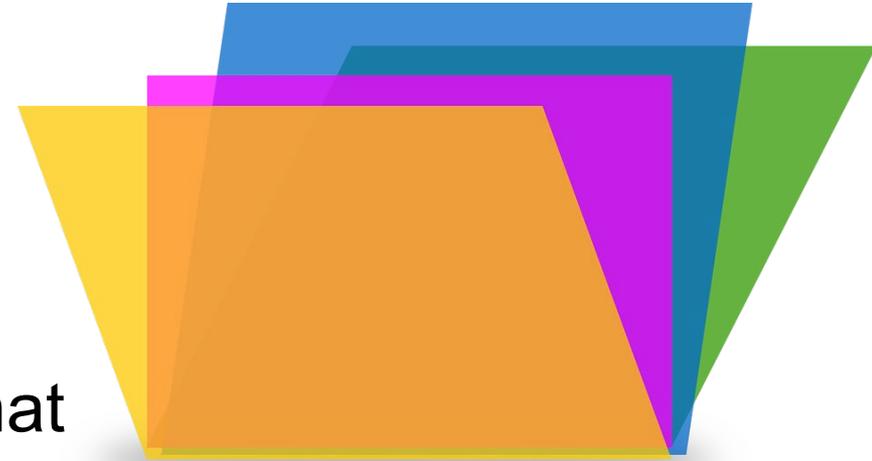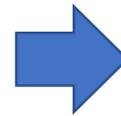
- Email Admissions to have students account inactivated
- Drop from all courses (notify field if they are in field)
- Put a note in SPACMNT about why they were dismissed
- Put advising hold on their account

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Are there any procedures that feel like a good fit across all CHAS Grad Programs?

- Brainstorm
    - Dismissal
    - Over 15 credits
    - Others?
- We could present something to Grad Collab.

# Resources

- [MSU Denver Grad Catalog](#)
- [MSW Policies and Procedures Website](#) (includes Problem Resolution Procedures)
- [Grad Lab Consult](#)

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Q & A

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