

# MSW Portfolio Overview



**Updated: Fall 2018**

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## Portfolio Project Overview

The portfolio consists of three components: the narrative, appendices, and presentation.

Together, these three components must demonstrate the student's:

- Mastery of the 13 competencies
- Mastery of the 5 elements of advanced integrated practice
- Professional development over the course of the program, including examples from practicum of experiences that promoted personal and professional growth
- Knowledge of key theories and relevant literature and ability to use both to guide practice
- Collaborative work with community members and organizations
- Ability to apply knowledge and practice skills at their practicum(s)

**The Narrative:** The narrative is a 15-20 page overview of your professional development during your time in the MSW program. In it, students should demonstrate the objectives above through examples and explanation. Students should also use the narrative to explain how the work included in their appendices demonstrates the portfolio objectives. The portfolio narrative should be in APA format with appropriate citations and works cited.

The narrative should provide evidence of the student's theoretical and practical knowledge base. For example, in addressing theories that inform practice, the student should not only name specific theories but also describe the key principles of the theory, cite theoretical sources, and provide a rationale that shows how and why this theory is relevant to practice. Students should use examples to demonstrate how specific knowledge is used in practice (e.g. group work skills, advocacy skills, motivational interviewing skills, skills of accompaniment, etc).

The narrative can be used to demonstrate development as an Advanced Integrated Practitioner. For example, a student may include an appendix item from Year One that shows foundational skills in research, such as a literature review. In the narrative, the student could refer to that work and also address how student's knowledge and skills have advanced since creating that document.

**The Appendices:** The appendices consist of work produced by the student during the MSW program that demonstrates the portfolio objectives. Students may include work from their courses and/or products developed in the context of practice (resource guides, action plans, outlines and supporting materials from presentations, etc.). Assignments for core social work courses have been designed for possible inclusion in the portfolio. (e.g. SW 505 final case study; SW 510 Interviews and application of theories of human development; SW 515 Theory paper; SW 520 Annotated bibliography; SW 521 Program evaluation proposal; SW 525 Group work proposal; SW 530 History of social welfare policy, advocate, or institution paper; SW 531 Policy analysis paper; SW 535 Scholarly impact project; SW 545 Leadership self-assessment). Students

are not required to include these items; they are listed here as possible examples of portfolio items.

Examples of materials to consider for appendices include:

- Agency reports (i.e., strategic planning, program evaluation)
- Case studies
- Grant proposals
- Policy analyses
- Program development plans
- Published documents (i.e., journal, newsletter, or newspaper articles)
- Professional papers
- Annotated bibliographies
- Research reports
- Community development projects
- Written text of legislative testimony
- Community organization meeting summaries
- Links to videos or Podcasts
- PowerPoint presentations

Students should explain how the work included in their appendices illustrates their professional development, knowledge, and abilities; **the appendices do not speak for themselves**. This explanation can occur in the narrative or in a rationale that accompanies each appendix.

NOTE: Portfolios are public documents that will be archived by the School of Social Work. Care should be taken to maintain anonymity and confidentiality in all documents. Students should consult with their advisors about any questions regarding anonymity and confidentiality in the portfolio documents.

[The Portfolio Presentation](#): A two-hour block is scheduled for the portfolio presentation. The structure is generally as follows:

1. Brief welcome, introductions, and overview of the process by the Portfolio chair (*5 minutes*)
2. Student presentation (*30-40 minutes*)
3. Questions and discussion—includes questions from committee members and audience (*+/- 30 minutes*)
4. Committee evaluation—the student and audience leave the room while committee meets (*15-20 minutes*)
5. Feedback from the committee to the student (*5-10 minutes*)

In addition to the committee, the student may invite colleagues, friends, and family to attend the portfolio presentation. Students can choose to make the presentation open to the public or open only to the student and committee.

## Portfolio Contents- Organization

The portfolio should be clearly organized. 1) Include a title page. You may title your portfolio if you wish or just refer to it as the “MSW Portfolio.” Include your name, date of presentation and names of committee members on title page. 2) Include a concise table of contents for the entire portfolio. 3) Include the Portfolio Checklist after the table of contents. 4) The narrative follows the table of contents. 5) The portfolio appendices follow the narrative. The appendices should be designated alphabetically, and each appendix should have a title (e.g. Appendix A: Applying the Code of Ethics in Practice; Appendix B: Analysis of Housing First Policy).

## Portfolio Committee

Students present the portfolio to their portfolio committee during the second semester of the concentration year. The committee will consist of the student’s faculty advisor, another faculty member from the School of Social work, and one person from outside the School. Examples of the outside committee person include the student’s agency supervisor, MSW outside supervisor, or a faculty member from another department at UM. The student’s advisor will serve as chair of the committee and work to ensure that the portfolio meets program requirements.

Students are responsible for contacting potential committee members to request their participation. Students should have their portfolio committees formed by the end of fall semester of their concentration year.

## Portfolio Timeline

- 4 weeks before presentation: Student submits portfolio draft to Chair
- 3 weeks before presentation: Chair provides feedback to student with suggestions for revision
- 2 weeks before presentation: Student submits revised portfolio to full committee
- 1 week before presentation: Chair and committee members provide feedback on revised portfolio and chair determines whether student goes ahead with the revised portfolio as is or makes further revisions prior to presentation.
- Presentation: Students receives feedback from committee, which includes expectations for any final portfolio revisions.
- Post-presentation: Chair and student set date for submission of final revised portfolio. The final revised portfolio must be uploaded in PDF or Word to Moodle by the last day of finals’ week in order for degree to be awarded through the Graduate School.

## Portfolio Logistics Checklist

### Have you:

- Formed a portfolio committee? **This should be completed by the end of Fall semester.**
- Set a date for the presentation and reserved a room? **This should be completed no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of Spring semester. It is your responsibility to be in touch with your three committee members to find a date and time that works for all. Neil or Elisha can assist you with room reservations.**

### Have you discussed with your advisor:

- The timeline for submitting the portfolio draft for feedback? (see timeline above)
- What format your advisor prefers the draft to be submitted in for feedback (i.e. submit the draft via email; feedback will be delivered electronically via Track Changes)?

### Prior to the last day of finals week, did you:

- Ensure a Word or PDF version of your portfolio was uploaded to Moodle? A final grade for portfolio and therefore your diploma cannot be issued without a copy of your portfolio on file.

## The 5 Elements of Advanced Integrated Practice

- Engage in ongoing critical self-reflection and examination of the values and assumptions that shape social work theory, practices, policies and programs.
- Bring historical, cultural, and political perspectives and a critical understanding of difference and oppression to bear in understanding the person-in-environment, social problems, interventions, and possibilities for social-justice-oriented action.
- Integrate the skills of direct practice and community work and creatively bridges multiple levels of intervention.
- Continually bring knowledge and skills of research, policy analysis, and advocacy to bear in practice, regardless of setting, problem area, or specific job description.
- Assume a leadership role in the profession and community to promote broad-based participation in efforts to empower individuals and groups, strengthen programs, and advocate policies and practice that promote social justice locally and globally.

## The 13 Competencies

- Identify as a professional social worker and conduct him/herself accordingly.
- Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
- Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.
- Engage diversity and difference in practice.
- Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

- Respond to contexts that shape practice.
- Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities.
- Apply knowledge and skills of integrated practice to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
- Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.
- Apply forms of leadership to support collaborative, interdisciplinary relationships and active participation of community members in addressing needs and concerns of individuals, families, and groups and communities.
- Demonstrate understanding of key social, political, and economic challenges facing communities of the Rocky Mountain West, intersection with global concerns, and implications for social work.

### Elements of Advanced Integrated Practice & Competency Map

You may find the following organizational scheme helpful when considering how to respond to both the competencies and elements of an Advanced Integrated Practitioner.

#### **As Advanced Integrated Practitioners, graduates of the MSW program will:**

- ◇ **Engage in ongoing critical self-reflection and examination of the values and assumptions that shape social work theory, practices, policies and programs.**

Corresponding Competencies:

- Identify as a professional social worker and conduct him/herself accordingly.
- Apply social work ethical principles to guide professional practice.
- Apply critical thinking to inform and communicate professional judgments.

- ◇ **Bring historical, cultural, and political perspectives and a critical understanding of difference and oppression to bear in understanding the person-in-environment, social problems, interventions, and possibilities for social-justice-oriented action.**

Corresponding Competencies:

- Engage diversity and difference in practice.
- Advance human rights and social and economic justice.
- Apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment.

- ◇ **Integrate the skills of direct practice and community work and creatively bridges multiple levels of intervention.**

Corresponding Competencies:

- Respond to contexts that shape practice.
- Engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate with individuals, families, groups,

organizations and communities.

- Apply knowledge and skills of integrated practice to work with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.

- ◇ **Continually bring knowledge and skills of research, policy analysis, and advocacy to bear in practice, regardless of setting, problem area, or specific job description.**

Corresponding Competencies:

- Engage in research-informed practice and practice-informed research.
- Engage in policy practice to advance social and economic well-being and to deliver effective social work services.

- ◇ **Assume a leadership role in the profession and community to promote broad-based participation in efforts to empower individuals and groups, strengthen programs, and advocate policies and practice that promote social justice locally and globally.**

Corresponding Competencies:

- Apply forms of leadership to support collaborative, interdisciplinary relationships and active participation of community members in addressing the needs and concerns of individuals, families and groups and communities.
- Demonstrate understanding of key social, political, and economic challenges facing communities of the Rocky Mountain West, intersection with global concerns, and implications for social work.