

DOCTORATE OF SOCIAL WORK

Mission Statement

The UMass Global Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) equips advanced practitioners, educators, and leaders with the knowledge, skills, and digital expertise to address complex social challenges. The DSW program prepares students to become innovative leaders in online higher education, telehealth clinical practice, and social and global entrepreneurship. It is centered in professional social work values and ethics, including social, racial, economic, and environmental justice. The DSW program will prepare students to eliminate inequities and enhance individual and community well-being through research-informed practice, leadership, and transformative teaching.

Program Description

The Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program at UMass Global is a cohort-based model that fosters a collaborative and supportive learning environment, with both synchronous and asynchronous components. Each student is paired with a dedicated faculty mentor who provides individualized guidance and support throughout the program, ensuring a personalized educational experience that addresses the student's academic and professional goals.

Professional Accreditation

The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) and its Board of Accreditation (BOA) (<https://www.cswe.org/about-cswe/governance/governance-groups/boa/>) piloted the accreditation of practice doctorate programs from 2021-2025. It is anticipated that additional practice doctorate programs will be able to seek accreditation in late-2025 (<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/professional-practice-doctoral-program-accreditation/accreditation-toolkit-pdp/>). This timeline is subject to change pending Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) review and expansion of the BOA's accreditation scope. CSWE's BOA is currently recognized (<https://www.chea.org/about-recognition/>) by the Council on Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) to accredit baccalaureate and master's social work degree programs in the United States and its territories. UMass Global has adopted the 2025-Accreditation-Standards-for-Practice-Doctorate-Social-Work-Programs.pdf (<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/c2a4c15d-7e77-4be4-92b0-e1e509b52212/2025-Accreditation-Standards-for-Practice-Doctorate-Social-Work-Programs.pdf>) and is prepared to seek accreditation once it becomes available. For information about practice doctorate program accreditation, please visit the Council on Social Work Education website (<https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/policies-process/practice-doctoral-program-accreditation/>). For additional information and recommendations from CSWE on the impact of DSW accreditation, please refer to this memo dated 3/31/25: Memo-to-the-Social-Work-Profession,-Practice-Doctorate-Program-Accreditation-3-31-25.pdf (<https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/d2a10586-6552-427d-8e39-340a296146c5/Memo-to-the-Social-Work-Profession,-Practice-Doctorate-Program-Accreditation-3-31-25.pdf>)

The DSW Program Learning Outcomes are the CSWE Core Expertise and Skills for Doctoral Practitioner-Scholars

Graduates of the program will be able to:

PLO 1- Advance practice through innovative approaches.

PLO 2- Use and critically evaluate research and knowledge.

PLO 3- Engage in scientific inquiry that reflects doctoral-level scholarship.

PLO 4- Develop and disseminate practice-relevant research-informed knowledge through a variety of channels, such as teaching, scholarship, professional presentations, mentoring, and administration.

PLO 5- Provide leadership in social work practice and/or education.

PLO 6- Develop and maintain substantive expertise in one or more areas of social work practice.

PLO 7- Strategically implement anti-oppressive, anti-racist, decolonized, and social justice-focused policies and practices at all systems levels (micro, mezzo, and macro).

Application Deadline and Program Start Dates

The start dates for the DSW Program are Fall I and Spring I. The application priority date is August 1 for Fall I and December 13 for Spring I; the specific dates will be established by the university.

Admission to the DSW Program

Admission to the DSW program is based on evaluation of all application materials and information submitted by the applicant. The DSW admissions committee reviews application materials and makes a decision to admit the applicant or deny admission. If denied admission, the applicant may submit a written appeal to the DSW Program Director via email at dsw@umassglobal.edu, within 30 calendar days from the date of the admission decision. Appeals will not be accepted after the 30-day window. After submitting an appeal, the applicant will receive a letter indicating the final decision to accept or uphold the admission committee's decision. An applicant who is denied admission to the DSW program must wait for the subsequent start date before becoming eligible to re-apply for admission to the program.

The DSW admissions committee members will consider only fully complete application packets. Decisions are based upon the quality of all application materials and information provided by the applicant. Submission of all required application materials does not guarantee admission into the DSW program. The DSW program admissions committee may request an interview with the applicant and/or the submission of recommendation forms. **Students admitted to the DSW program will be admitted under the catalog year based upon their program start date and not their program admission date.**

Admission by Prior Graduate Degree

Earned Master's degree in Social Work from a CSWE-accredited program and a minimum of 2 years practice experience in social work post master's degree.

Admission Criteria and Application Requirements

Prospective DSW students must demonstrate their readiness to succeed in doctoral-level academic coursework by satisfactorily fulfilling these admission requirements.

1. Online application.
2. Official transcripts showing a conferred MSW from a CSWE-accredited program with a minimum 3.0 GPA. Applicants who have a social work degree from outside of the United States must have their degree evaluated by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). The applicant is responsible for submitting their transcript to be evaluated by CSWE.
3. A current resume/curriculum vitae showing two years of post-MSW professional social work experience that outlines their educational

background, employment history, professional activities, and other activities that provide support for admission. Because this is a practitioner degree, students are expected to have had relevant social work experience.

4. Personal reflective statement: Applicants must submit an 800 to 1,000 word essay that addresses their commitment to anti-racism and shares examples of how they have professionally demonstrated dedication to social justice principles. Applicants should detail their purpose for study in a doctoral program, providing specific objectives and career goals. Applicants should identify how their aspirations connect to an area of interest for their Capstone.
5. If a candidate has left their previous doctoral program within the last five years, they must submit:
 - a. A letter of good standing from the dean or program director of the program in which they are currently or were previously enrolled.
 - b. A personal statement explaining the reason for leaving their current or previous program and pursuing a DSW at UMass Global.

Credit for Life Experience

Credit is not granted for any type of previous work experience or life experience.

Transfer of Coursework

The Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program is committed to supporting the academic and professional growth of our students. The transfer credit policy aims to recognize and honor prior doctoral coursework completed at an institutionally accredited institution.

Students may transfer up to the equivalent of 6 semester credits with a "B" or better from their current or past (within seven years) doctoral program. The coursework must be taken at an institutionally accredited institution and be at the doctoral level. The coursework must align closely with the content and rigor of equivalent courses within the DSW program. Students will need to submit their doctoral syllabi to the DSW Program Director along with a justification as to how these courses are applicable to the UMass Global DSW curriculum. All requests for transfer credits must be submitted before a student may begin the DSW program.

This DSW transfer credit policy reflects UMass Global's commitment to academic integrity, rigor, and equity. Additionally, it recognizes the prior learning of our students while maintaining the high standards of the doctoral program.

Requirements for the Doctorate of Social Work

Core Degree Requirements

SOWK 700	Introduction to Doctoral Studies: Becoming a Practitioner-Scholar Leader	3
SOWK 701	Adaptive Leadership through a Social Justice Lens and Trauma-Informed Approach	3
SOWK 702	Contemporary Theories and Epistemology of Advanced Ethical and Equitable Practice	3
SOWK 703	Advanced Telehealth Clinical Practice with Diverse Populations	3
SOWK 704	Research Methodology	3

SOWK 705	Social and Global Entrepreneurship to Promote Human Rights and Social Justice	3
SOWK 706	Teaching in Online Learning Environments: Theories, Methods, and Assessment	3
SOWK 707	Clinical and Program Evaluation	3
SOWK 751	Strategic and Innovative Leadership and Administration across Settings	3
SOWK 752	Integrative Seminar: Capstone Planning and Proposal	3
SOWK 753	Capstone 1	3
SOWK 754	Capstone 2	3
SOWK 797	Capstone Continuation Course	0
Core Requirements Subtotal		36
Choose one of the following innovation Lab elective choices:		3
SOWK 730	Teaching in Online Learning Environments: Course Design, Instruction, and Evaluation	
SOWK 731	Telehealth Program Design and Evaluation	
SOWK 732	Design Laboratory for Social and Global Innovation	
Total Credits		39

Capstone

The purpose of the Capstone project in the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program is to provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate and apply advanced knowledge and skills to address real-world social work issues. It serves as a culminating experience that synthesizes learning from the entire program, allowing students to demonstrate their ability to engage in critical thinking, research, and problem-solving in a practical, professional context. Students tackle complex social problems or challenges within their area of expertise, creating evidence-based interventions, new programs or agencies addressing a societal need, or innovative teaching or practice models that contribute to the advancement of the social work profession. The Capstone serves as the final academic product that demonstrates students' core expertise and skills and contributes to the advancement of practice.

GPA Requirements

Students must maintain a 3.0 grade point average throughout the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program course of study. For successful completion, a student must receive a letter grade of "B" or better in each DSW course.

Advancement to Candidacy

Students must successfully complete SOWK 752 Integrative Seminar: Capstone Planning and Proposal to advance to candidacy in the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program.

Writing Standard

The writing standard for the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program must reflect a high level of scholarly rigor, critical thinking, original thought, and professional communication. Students are expected to produce well-organized, evidence-based work demonstrating acuity of social work theory, practice, and research. Writing must be clear, concise, and adhere to the most current version of APA style guidelines, with an emphasis on integrating relevant literature, conducting thorough

analyses, and presenting complex ideas in a coherent and accessible manner. Students whose work does not meet standards will be expected to take advantage of the online tutorials and support services available in the Online Writing and Math Center and follow through on other faculty recommendations to improve their writing.

Cohorts

The cohort model of learning in the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program fosters a collaborative, supportive environment that enhances both personal and professional growth. By progressing through the program together, students develop strong peer networks, enabling knowledge sharing, mutual support, and a sense of accountability. This structure mirrors the teamwork inherent in social work, encouraging students to collaborate on problem-solving, share diverse perspectives, and engage in meaningful discussions. The model helps to reduce isolation, improve retention, and strengthen leadership skills through group projects and shared experiences.

The cohort model creates lasting professional relationships that often extend beyond graduation. These connections support ongoing learning, mentorship, and collaboration in the social work profession. Graduates of cohort-based programs benefit from diverse perspectives and collective knowledge, which broadens their understanding of complex social issues and helps them develop sustainable, innovative solutions. This model builds a community of practice that fosters professional excellence and leadership, equipping students with the skills necessary for an advanced level of social work practice.

Attendance (Synchronous and Asynchronous)

The Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program will have both synchronous and asynchronous components. For synchronous learning, students are required to attend Zoom class sessions as outlined in each course syllabus. These interactive meetings provide real-time discussions, direct feedback, and opportunities for collaborative learning.

The asynchronous components include engaging with course resources, reading materials, discussion boards, assignments, group projects, and other activities. The asynchronous format offers flexibility, enabling students to balance their academic commitments with professional and personal responsibilities.

University of Massachusetts Global's commitment to learning requires that students be present and participate fully in all activities. To maximize learning and in fairness to colleagues, students must attend synchronous class sessions and meetings. If a student cannot attend these sessions, they must notify the instructor prior to their absence. Patterns of tardiness, absences, or incomplete assignments may result in a Step 1 professional conduct meeting and can affect the course grade or continuation in the course or program.

Interrupted Enrollment

Although the university has an interrupted enrollment policy that applies to other programs, the Social Work Department has a separate policy for the Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program. If a student needs to interrupt enrollment from the program for personal or professional reasons, it will be necessary to complete a Leave of Absence form stating the reasons for the absence and the expected date of return.

When a student interrupts enrollment in the DSW program, course sequence and program design make it necessary to re-enter the program during a designated term approved by the DSW program director to continue coursework. Students who interrupt enrollment for more than two years will need to re-apply.

Program Completion Timeline

The Doctorate of Social Work (DSW) program is designed to be completed in two years. Interrupted enrollment/leave of absence will extend this timeline. Students who have not completed coursework within six years will have to re-apply and re-take all coursework.

Ethical and Professional Standards and Conduct Policy

Upon admission to the social work department programs (BASW, MSW, DSW), students are expected to meet all social work department standards and abide by the NASW Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/>) and the University of Massachusetts Global Student Code of Conduct. The social work department prepares students to work in the helping profession at a variety of levels and the program faculty assume the responsibility for reasonably assuring that individuals who complete one of the programs in the department are academically competent, aware, and adhere to the established ethical and professional standards of the profession, the NASW Code of Ethics. A student enrolled in any program within the social work department must adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and should understand that they are being trained in a program which is not only academic, but also professional in nature.

Faculty, directors, and deans in the social work department have the right and ethical obligation to continually evaluate, and, if necessary, to suspend or terminate the student's participation in the program at any point for ethical violations and/or personal unsuitability for the profession. This philosophy is consistent with that of other professional programs which are engaged in certifying that their graduates are competent to engage in the practice of professional social work. Please see NASW Code of Ethics, Standard 2 (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English/Social-Workers-Ethical-Responsibilities-to-Colleagues/>): Social Workers Ethical Responsibilities to Colleagues; Standard 2.08 Impairment of Colleagues, Standard 2.09 Incompetence of Colleagues, and Standard 2.10 Unethical Conduct of Colleagues.

It is understood, therefore, that students will be required to follow the NASW Code of Ethics to be admitted into any of the programs within the social work department. Faculty will assess each student's status in meeting these standards on a continuing basis, and students experiencing difficulties will be advised as to the appropriate means of remediating such difficulties by the faculty, program director, or Dean's Office as appropriate. A full listing of the NASW Code of Ethics can be found at [socialworkers.org](https://www.socialworkers.org), under the About tab. In addition, the Social Work department has adopted a set of professional dispositions that represent expected conduct standards for social work students, consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics. The dispositions are examples of the kind of conduct expected of students in the social work program but are not intended to be exhaustive. The professional dispositions can be found on the myumassglobal website on the social work webpage in the Student Handbook for the BASW, MSW, and DSW programs.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse, and/or Other Personal Challenges:

Please note the following standard from the NASW Code of Ethics (<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English/Social-Workers-Ethical-Responsibilities-as-Professionals/>):

Social Workers Ethical Responsibilities as Professional, Standard 4.05, Impairment.

(a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health

difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.

(b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

Students with a mental health or some other diagnosis are encouraged to share their circumstances early in the professional conduct process with the program director and/or the Office of Accessible Education ("OAE") upon receipt of the conduct meeting letter. If you are not already registered with the OAE, any documentation related to your diagnosis should not be shared with the program, unless you voluntarily choose to do so. In this scenario, students are encouraged to consider registering with the OAE, as that is the university office charged with assessing diagnoses or conditions that may qualify for university accommodations. Upon receipt of the student information, the program director will guide the faculty member in charge of the conduct meeting, ensuring consideration of this condition. All information shared will be kept confidential and only provided to other staff or faculty on a need-to-know basis. A student's mental health condition may be considered if or when sanctions are applied by the program to assist with the remediation of the identified challenging/problematic behavior (i.e. counseling, etc.). Failure to take adequate steps to address or remedy personal challenges include but are not limited to, psychosocial distress, substance abuse, suicidality, or mental health impairment that interfere in the field practicum or the classroom learning environments. Impaired performance in the classroom or in field practicum include, but are not limited to, active substance use, inability to focus or communicate, distortion in thought processes, or inability to develop appropriate working relationships in the social work context. In order to appropriately consider students' mental health diagnoses and other conditions, the program may consult with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). If a student does not have a current plan with the OAE, a referral will be recommended by the program director or faculty member who is working with the student.

Students who are unable to address how their personal challenges impact their work with clients or interfere with ethical, evidenced-informed practice, will be required to postpone engagement or completion of their program or field practicum until they are able to demonstrate awareness and effectively address how their challenges intersect with the work they engage in with clients.

The CARES team is a campus-wide team of appointed staff and faculty responsible for identifying, assessing, and responding to concerns and/or disruptive behaviors by students, faculty/staff, and community members who struggle academically, emotionally, or psychologically, or who present a risk to the health or safety of the university or its members. For assistance contact CARES:

Email: cares@umassglobal.edu

Hotline: 949-383-3119

The University of Massachusetts Global is committed to providing an accessible educational experience for all learners. If a student requires accommodations for a disability to fully participate in the professional conduct process below, please contact the appropriate program director

or the Office of Accessible Education (OAE) at oea@umassglobal.edu to request disability accommodations.

Professional Conduct Policy and Conduct Meetings

The professional conduct policy applies to current students and graduated students and follows a restorative justice model. A restorative justice conduct process emphasizes repairing harm, fostering accountability, and promoting the well-being of all individuals involved. The process aligns with the values of social work, respect for the dignity and worth of people, the importance of human relationships, and the promotion of social justice. There are three steps to this process which include a step one meeting (first offense), a step two meeting (second offense), and a step three recommendation (suspension or dismissal from the BASW/MSW/DSW program).

Current Social Work Students

For current social work students, the professional conduct procedures are as follows. For step one and two meetings:

- The meeting shall be held in Zoom or on a similar virtual conference platform.
- Subject to written approval from the student, the meeting shall be recorded and the URL for the recording provided to the student, the presiding faculty, and the program director.
- Students are expected to be in a quiet and private area during professional conduct meetings with faculty.
- Students must have their webcam working and turned on for the duration of the meeting.
- Students are expected to plan to attend conduct meetings at the date and time scheduled, during regular business hours. Canceling and rescheduling a meeting will only be considered for those students with extenuating circumstances such as major illness, hospitalization, death of a family member, etc.
- The student may choose to have a silent observer attend the meeting. This does not include attorneys. The presence of attorneys at the meeting is not permitted as the meeting is not meant to function as a court of law. The silent observer may not participate directly in the meeting. Failure to comply with these rules may result in the removal of the silent observer or the termination of the meeting. One five-minute recess may be requested during the meeting if the student wishes to consult with the silent observer.

Step One Meeting: When a program faculty member observes or becomes aware of behavior that brings into question a student's ability to maintain the NASW Code of Ethics, the faculty member shall meet with the student to discuss the behavior and to advise as to appropriate means of remediating such behavioral concerns.

A second faculty member will be in attendance if the first faculty is an adjunct instructor. The second faculty member will be the course manager of the adjunct instructor's course or the field placement faculty for those students experiencing issues in field practicum. Full-time faculty members will not need a second faculty member in attendance at step one meetings. A staff member will attend the meeting silently for the purpose of documenting the meeting's proceedings.

During the meeting, the faculty member(s) will identify the behaviors of concern, discuss the behavioral concerns with the student, solicit the student's response to the behavioral concerns in question, and advise the student as to appropriate means of remediating the behavioral concerns. The staff member will document the meeting's proceedings. After the meeting, the faculty member who ran the meeting will write the meeting summary and provide it to the program director for review. Once

approved, the program director will provide the written summary of the meeting to the student. The summary will include the identified behaviors of concern, any guidance provided by faculty, the student's response during the meeting, and any additional recommendations for remediating the behavioral concerns warranted by the meeting's proceedings.

Student non-attendance for a step one conduct meeting is considered a second conduct violation and will be treated as such. If the student fails to attend the step one conduct meeting, the faculty member will complete a meeting summary indicating such and complete a second professional dispositions summary initiating a step two conduct meeting with the program director and field director. For DSW students, the DSW Program Director and a program director from either the BASW or MSW program will meet with the student for a step two meeting.

Step Two Meeting: At any time after the Step One Meeting, it is deemed that a student's ability to maintain the NASW Code of Ethics remains in question and behavioral concerns remain unresolved, a second, step two conduct meeting shall be scheduled. Other reasons why a step two may be scheduled; non-attendance at a step one meeting or the student had a previous step one meeting and now has a new issue to be resolved.

This second meeting shall be attended by the program director or designee, field director or designee, and student. For DSW students, the DSW Program Director and a program director from either the BASW or MSW program will meet with the student for a step two meeting. If the faculty member who met with the student in step 1 was the program director or field director, the Dean, or dean's designee, will appoint a different faculty member to substitute for the program director or field director. A staff member will also attend the meeting silently for the purpose of documenting the meeting's proceedings.

During the meeting, the program or field director will identify the behaviors of concern, discuss the behavioral concerns with the student, solicit the student's response to the behavioral concerns in question, and advise the student as to appropriate means of remediating the behavioral concerns. The staff member will document the meeting's proceedings. After the meeting, the program director will provide a written summary of the meeting to the student, including the identified behaviors of concern, any guidance provided by faculty, the student's response during the meeting, and any additional recommendations for remediating the behavioral concerns warranted by the meeting's proceedings. Student non-attendance for a step two conduct meeting will automatically result in a step three recommendation.

Appealing a Step One or Two Decision: There is no appeal process for step one or two recommendations or decisions. All decisions and recommendations made by faculty or program directors in step one or two meetings are based on program policy and are final.

Step Three Recommendation: At any time after the Step Two Meeting, if the program director and field director deem that the student's ability to maintain appropriate professional, ethical, and/or personal standards remains in question and the behavioral concerns remain unresolved, or if the student did not show up for a step one or two meeting, they may recommend to the Dean that the student be suspended or dismissed from the program. The Dean may suspend or dismiss the student from the program, with written notice provided to the student. The suspension or dismissal takes effect upon the Dean's issuance of the official letter of suspension or dismissal. A student dismissed from the program under the professional conduct policy is not eligible for readmission to the program.

A notice of suspension will be sent via certified email and emailed to the student's UMass Global email account and will specify (a) the earliest date at which the Dean will consider lifting the suspension; (b) the steps that the student must take for the Dean to consider lifting the suspension; and (c) the deadline by which the student must complete those steps and request that the suspension be lifted. If, by that deadline, the student has not submitted a request that in the Dean's assessment is sufficient to warrant lifting the suspension, the suspension will convert to dismissal from the program, with written notice provided to the student. That dismissal takes effect upon the Dean's issuance of the official letter of dismissal. The 30 calendar-day appeals window begins upon receipt of the emailed letter and does not depend upon the student opening or reading it. The certified letter is only used as a secondary method of notification.

Appealing a Step Three Decision: A student who is dismissed or suspended from the program may, within 30 calendar days of receipt of the dismissal or suspension notification, petition the Dean's ruling to a professional review committee. The petition process is documentation-based and does not include a synchronous hearing. To file a petition, the student must submit to the Dean a written petition with supporting documentation appended. The Dean will forward the written petition and supporting documentation to the professional review committee. After review, the professional review committee will issue a final ruling within 30 calendar days of the Dean's receipt of the student's petition. The committee's ruling is not subject to appeal.

Conduct Process for Graduated Students

For graduated students, for whom information is discovered after the time of their degree completion regarding alleged ethical or professional violations that occurred during the time they were enrolled in any program within the social work department, the professional conduct procedures are as follows:

- Faculty or staff will alert the program director about the graduated student and the ethical or professional violation.
- The program director will investigate the ethical or professional violation allegations.

After reviewing their findings, the program director may choose to convene a Professional Conduct Meeting. This meeting shall be attended by the Program Director/designee, Field Director/ designee, and graduated student. For DSW students, the DSW Program Director and a program director from either the BASW or MSW program will meet with the student for a step two meeting. A staff member will also attend the meeting silently for the purpose of documenting the meeting's proceedings.

- The meeting shall be held in Zoom or on a similar virtual conference platform.
- Subject to written approval from the student, the meeting shall be recorded and the URL for the recording provided to the student, the presiding faculty, and the program director.
- Students are expected to be in a quiet and private area during professional conduct meetings with faculty.
- Students must have their webcam working and turned on for the duration of the meeting.
- Students are expected to make arrangements to attend conduct meetings at the date and time scheduled, during regular business hours. Canceling and rescheduling a meeting will only be considered for those students with extenuating circumstances such as major illness, hospitalization, death of a family member, etc.

- The student may choose to have a silent observer attend the meeting. This does not include attorneys. The presence of attorneys at the meeting is not permitted as the meeting is not meant to function as a court of law. The silent observer may not participate directly in the meeting. Failure to comply with these rules may result in the removal of the silent observer or the termination of the meeting. One five-minute recess may be requested during the meeting if the student wishes to consult with the silent observer.

During the meeting, the program director and field director will identify the behaviors of concern, discuss the behavioral concerns with the graduated student, and solicit the student's response to the behavioral concerns in question. The staff member will document the meeting's proceedings. After the meeting, the program director will provide a written summary of the meeting to the graduated student, including the identified behaviors of concern and the graduated student's response.

Based on their investigation and on the proceedings of the Professional Conduct Meeting, if the program director and field director (in the case of DSW students, BASW or MSW Program Director) deem that the graduated student committed egregious violation(s) of ethical or professional conduct during the time that they were enrolled in the program, and that such violation(s) would have merited a recommendation to the Dean of suspension or dismissal from the program if the violation(s) had been discovered when the graduated student was enrolled in the program, the program director and field director/designee (in the case of DSW students, BASW or MSW Program Director) may recommend to the Dean that the graduated student's degree be revoked. The Dean may issue the graduated student a letter of intent to revoke the graduated student's degree.

A graduated student receiving a Dean's letter of intent to revoke the student's degree may submit a written appeal to the Dean with supporting documentation, within 30 calendar days of transmission of the Dean's letter of intent. This appeal process is documentation-based and does not include a synchronous hearing. After review of the student's written appeal and supporting documentation, the Dean may or may not decide to revoke the graduated student's degree, with written notice of either outcome provided to the student.

A graduated student whose degree is revoked may, within 30 calendar days of transmission of the notification of degree revocation, petition the Dean's ruling to a professional review committee. The petition process is documentation-based and does not include a synchronous hearing. To file a petition, the graduated student must submit to the Dean a written petition with supporting documentation appended. The Dean will forward the written petition and supporting documentation to the professional review committee. After review, the professional review committee will issue a final ruling within 30 calendar days of Dean's receipt of the graduated student's petition. The committee's ruling is not subject to appeal.

If a graduated student's degree is revoked, and if the student had been a California resident at the time of degree conferral, the program's Board of Behavioral Science (BBS) liaison will inform the BBS that the student no longer holds a degree from University of Massachusetts Global. If the graduated student resided in Washington at the time of degree conferral, the program's Washington State Department of Health (WDH) liaison will inform the WDH that the student no longer holds a degree from University of Massachusetts Global. In addition, and only if known, the University representative will also inform the state governing body where the student is currently in clinical authorized practice.

Conduct Process: What to Expect

Students are expected to be in a quiet and private area during professional conduct meetings with faculty/directors. Students must have their webcam working and turned on for the duration of the meeting. The lead faculty/director for the meeting will review the PDI and concerns that led to the PDI. The faculty/director will discuss the link to the NASW Code of Ethics and why the student's conduct was in violation to the code. The student will be given an opportunity to comment on the concerns. The meeting will close with the faculty/director making recommendations to the student for ways in which they can improve their behavior and provide next steps for after the conduct meeting.