

Practice Note

Social Work Student Representation and Title Use

In the province of Manitoba, the practice of social work is legislated by *The Social Work Profession Act, 2015* (*The Act, SWPA*).

In accordance with *The Act* only individuals who hold a current Certificate of Practice with the Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW) are legally allowed to:

- Use the title "Social Worker" or "Registered Social Worker (RSW)"
- Represent themselves as a Social Worker in any way, either directly or indirectly
- Use any sign, display, or advertisement that could lead someone to believe they are a Social Worker

These provisions apply regardless of job title, role, internship, or place of employment.

The MCSW Code of Ethics (2015), the MCSW Standards of Practice (2021) and the new Canadian Association of Social Workers (2024) require that Social Workers represent themselves honestly and do not misrepresent their qualifications, education or experience.

Service participants have the right to know the qualifications and licensing status of the person they are working with, so they can make informed choices about their care.

Representation as a Social Work Student

The College encourages all social work students to register as Student Members. Membership offers benefits such access to resources, professional development, and networking.

Title:

Student Members can identify themselves as:

- Student Members of the Manitoba College of Social Workers

Students cannot call themselves "Social Workers" or use the "RSW" designation.

Upon graduation, the granting of a degree is one prerequisite of admission to the profession. As with other regulated professions, a degree does not, on its own, entitle an individual to refer to themselves as a member of the profession or to otherwise adopt protected titles contrary to the governing legislation.

The provisions of *The Act* clearly indicate the attainment of a BSW or an MSW or any other educational credential, without registration, is not sufficient to permit an individual to use the protected title of "Social Worker", or to otherwise hold out that the person is a practising Social Worker.

Education:

Prior to graduating with a degree, BSW or MSW students may use the titles:

- Social Work Student
- Social Work Intern

Undergraduate BSW or graduate MSW programs do not have candidacy exams or status, therefore formal candidacy is not available to social work students. Terms such as *social worker candidate*, BSW (candidate), MSW (candidate) are not recognized designations in the Province of Manitoba.

MCSW Registration Numbers:

MCSW registration numbers (certificate #) are issued to MCSW registrants on their certificate of registration and are listed on certificates of practice. A certificate number demonstrates that the person registered meets the requirements outlined in the *SWPA* and permits them to use the title Social Worker. These numbers are not transferrable to any other professional/service provider/student.

Please contact the Manitoba College of Social Workers or your University if you have questions about your title and how best to represent yourself.

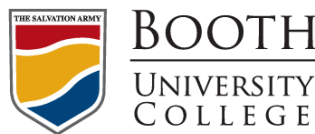
Resources:

Manitoba College of Social Workers (MCSW), Standards of Practice, #3.3

MCSW Code of Ethics #3.5.4 and #7.1.4

CASW Code of Ethics #5.1.1

Practice Notes provide support and information for Manitoba social workers, employers, and members of the public regarding social work practice issues. These notes offer general guidance only and are not a substitution for legal advice. [Practice Guidance - MCSW](#)



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